My Italian Year

By Richard Bagot

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/myitalianyear00bagouoft

MY ITALIAN YEAR

Photo] [Alinari.

THE ROYAL PALACE, TURIN.

HI
B148Gm

MY ITALIAN YEAR

BY

RICHARD BAGOT

AUTHOR OF
"A ROMAN MYSTERY" "CASTING OF NETS" "DONNA DIANA"
"THE HOUSE OF SERRAVALLE" "THE ITALIAN LAKES" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

SECOND EDITION

MILLS & BOON, LIMITED
49 RUPERT STREET
LONDON, W

128991
8/8/13

Published 1911

CONTENTS

CHAP. PAGE

I. A PRELUDE 1

II. THE GATES OF ITALY 12

III. SKETCHES IN THE COMASCO 50

IV. IN TUSCANY 81

V. IN TUSCANY—*continued* 113

VI. SOCIAL ROME 126

VII. MILITARY MATTERS 156

VIII. SOME ROMAN CHARACTERISTICS 167

IX. THE PONTINE MARSHES 198

X. CONCERNING THE NEAPOLITANS 223

XI. A CHAPTER OF DIGRESSIONS 253

XII. IN MAGNA GRECIA 265

XIII. PALERMO AND THE MAFFIA . . . 281

XIV. ON CLASSIC GROUND 301

XV. THE TRIUMPH OF ITALY 314

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The Royal Palace, Turin . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

La Scala 32

On the Lago di Como 47

The Cathedral, Como 53

Florence 82

Serravalle Pistoiese 100

Pisa 123

The Lagoon at Orbetello 124

Rome, from the Gianicolo 128

A Group of Corazzieri 162

The Roman Campagna 167

Ninfa 211

Buffalo in the Pontine Marshes 218

Monte Cassino 220

The Palace of Caserta 225

Neapolitan Undesirables 229

Capri 255

Rocks at Capri 257

Marina di Capri 258

Temple of Poseidon, Pæstum 275

Palermo, and Monte Pellegrino 281

Messina—Before the Earthquake 308

Messina—After the Earthquake 310

Via Vittorio Emanuele, Messina—After the Earthquake 312

Monument to Victor Emanuel, Rome 314

MY ITALIAN YEAR

CHAPTER I

A PRELUDE

SO many books have been written on Italy that, in adding to their number, something in the nature of an apology would almost seem to be desirable. Literary and artistic experts, historians, politicians, and men of science have turned again and again to Italy as to a mine of well-nigh inexhaustible wealth, while poets and novelists have ever regarded her as a sovereign mistress in the realms of imagination.

But it is not to these that the present writer feels it incumbent upon him to offer an apology for his pages, but rather to the people of the country with whom this volume is concerned. If a residence of over twenty years in Italy, and more than half a lifetime spent almost exclusively among Italians of all classes, have taught him nothing else, they have at least convinced him of the extreme difficulty of reconciling the Anglo-Saxon spirit with that of the Latin races. This observation, I admit, would appear to be a platitude; but it is, as I think, one of those many platitudes which it is as well perpetually to bear in mind, and its neglect has indubitably caused very many English and American writers on Italian subjects to draw altogether misleading impressions of the characteristics and temperament of the Italians. The truth is that any Anglo-Saxon writer whose desire it may be to present his readers with a tolerably faithful and accurate description of Italian life must, so to speak, get outside his Anglo-Saxon temperament, and endeavour to view his subject from a purely Latin standpoint. Now, this is a psychical feat extremely difficult of accomplishment, and especially so, perhaps, to an Englishman or an Englishwoman. Moreover, even if it be more or less successfully accomplished, the victory is by no means won. A writer may succeed in imbuing himself with a temperament alien to his own. He can scarcely succeed, however, in temporarily transferring that temperament to his readers, although it should sometimes be his ambition to do so.

There is certainly no other continental country in which so large a number of English people elect to dwell as Italy. Every Italian city of historic or artistic importance has its English colony, and in such places as Rome, Florence, and Venice these foreign settlements are very considerable. It has always been something of a mystery to me why this should be. That my compatriots should visit Italy periodically and enjoy for a few weeks her climate, her lovely scenery, and her art treasures is, of course, completely understandable. Such as these come, and go. The others, on the other hand, come, and do not go. That is the pity of it. To find an English resident in Italy who is not perpetually in a state of only semi-suppressed irritation with the Italians is a thing so rare as to be remarkable. "They are like children" is the stock criticism of the average English resident regarding the people in whose midst he has elected to dwell; and on whom, if he could only realise it, he is dependent for the smoothness of life. I have often wondered if he ever by any chance hears Italian criticism regarding himself. I imagine not, however; and, moreover, even were he to hear it, he would in all probability be not much the wiser—since the Italian language is, as a rule, the very last thing he troubles himself to study in the land of his adoption. A smattering sufficient for household purposes, for paying his way, and for abusing the natives, is considered sufficient, and how often have I heard the expression used with smug complacency—"Oh, English carries one everywhere!" I confess that it is an expression which enrages me, as being the babble of a fool. No, assuredly I have often wondered what the satisfaction can be of living among a people whose methods are a constant source of annoyance, whose word is not to be depended upon, whose morals are deplorable, and who, in short, are thoroughly objectionable and untrustworthy. Economy surely cannot be the motive, for, as I shall presently have occasion to point out in these pages, Italy is by no means a cheap country in which to live. It cannot be climate, either; for in the winter the climate of the south of England is infinitely better than that of, we will say, Florence; and no sooner has the summer season commenced—that season when Italy is at her best—than our Englishman begins to grumble at the heat, and, if he can afford it, hurries northward across the Alps. I can only come to the conclusion that, notwithstanding his racial prejudices, and in spite of his peculiarly British sense of superiority, Italy fascinates him against his will, and that in his secret soul he does not regard the Italians as being quite so black as he delights in asserting them to be. Perhaps, too, at the back of his mind lurks an unpleasant suspicion that it may be his own lack of understanding and sympathy which creates for him so many difficulties in his dealings with his Latin surroundings. Poor man! If he could only realise that the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon point of view are seldom precisely similar, he would be spared many petty annoyances and, perhaps, some of a more serious nature. If he could only realise, too, that he is living in a country where a pleasant smile and sometimes a little good-natured "chaff" obtain far more practical results than impatience or abuse, he would find his daily life considerably more satisfactory. I freely admit, however, that it is hard to smile when one's favourite prejudices are being ruthlessly offended, and that it is still harder to "chaff" the offenders when one possesses only a rudimentary acquaintance with their language. And here I would ask: Why, in the name of common sense, live in a country and elect to remain practically in ignorance of its language? Such a position would seem analogous to that of a man who, having purchased a beautiful house, was unable to enter it, and to make himself master of its contents, because he had at the same time refused to purchase the key of the front door. I do not mean to imply that all English people residing in Italy are ignorant of Italian, but I think I am not, probably, beyond the mark in saying that an enormous percentage pass the greater portion of their lives in the country, and are to all practical intents and purposes but superficially acquainted with the language. I have invariably found, moreover, that these are the severest and most uncompromising critics of the people among whom, but not in any sense with whom, they dwell. On this latter point, also, I would like to insist, for it forms an important factor in the mystery which I would fain unravel to my own satisfaction. The English colony in every Italian city is a little—a very little—England. It has its English life, its English habits, even its English food, and that not only material but also spiritual. It is, as a rule, under the pleasing delusion that it forms a part of Italy and Italian life, but with a strange inconsistency it is quite likely to allude to the Italians as "foreigners," and invariably thinks of them as such in its superior British mind. It is extremely rare, except in Rome, where the society, which spells its name with a capital S, has been until recently largely cosmopolitan, to find an English man or woman who is on an intimate footing in the Italian world; while even the few who do mix in Italian society either herd together, or foregather with the American element. This habit, it may be added, cannot be ascribed to shyness at not knowing the Italian language; for in all the chief Italian cities there are countless men and women of the world who can talk English fluently, and often perfectly. It is true, of course, that the majority of our compatriots are unable, for varying reasons, to obtain the entry into *la haute société* in Italy or elsewhere. But in no country is *la haute société* the only department of Society into which one may profitably enter; and, as a matter of fact, in Italy it is by far the least interesting of all the various social worlds. Our typical English resident, however, maintains the same attitude of aloofness and superiority to all the departments of Italian social life. Visits to other English residents, entertainments at the English consuls' or the English chaplains', lawn tennis at the English club, dances at the hotels frequented by English people—these form the daily round of his life in such cities as Rome, Florence, and Venice, and except for the satisfaction of being able to print Palazzo this, or Villa that on his note-paper and his visiting-cards, he might quite as well be in South Kensington as in either of the three.

I am inclined to think that our typical English man and woman expect too much from Italian society, and that they are, if I may so put it, in a perpetual state of huff. I have constantly heard them say: It is quite useless to try to make real friends among these Italians, for one never gets to know them any better. They will dine with us if we invite them—but they never do anything in return. Well, perhaps there are faults on both sides! But, according to my interpretation of it, the Anglo-Saxon is apt to attribute far too much importance to the stomach as a factor in the production of social intimacy. He will prepare a banquet, and ask his Italian acquaintance to come and partake of it. It will in all probability be an expensive banquet, such as he would never dream of providing for his own family circle on ordinary occasions. His Italian acquaintances come, eat, and wonder. Then they return home and say to each other: We should like to ask those English people to dine with us—they are very nice, very *simpatici*—but they would expect too much. And so the Browns' dinner bears no fruit, and Mrs. Brown declares to her friends that the Italians will take all they can get and give nothing in return, while Mr. Brown dismisses them as a damned inhospitable, stingy lot, like all foreigners.

The fact is that the Latin idea of hospitality differs fundamentally from the Anglo-Saxon. To the average Italian the fact of being invited to eat a pretentious and costly meal does not imply any particular social intimacy or any particular social obligation. Rather, indeed, does it imply a formality which is by no means conducive to intimacy. If, for instance, the Browns had said to their Italian acquaintances: Come and dine with us *en famille* one of these nights, quite informally, and please do not expect a dinner-party—in all probability the Italians would have taken it as a friendly and agreeable invitation, and would not only have come, but would have asked the Browns to a similar informal entertainment. I am assuming, of course, that their Italian friends were not important personages, official or otherwise, who could scarcely be asked informally to take "pot-luck" unless the Browns had something more than a casual acquaintance with them.

These little social incidents are trifling enough in themselves; but they are important factors in the mutual understanding and appreciation which are necessary before two races, differing so widely from each other as do the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon, can fairly estimate their respective merits and demerits. In the present volume my readers must not expect to find detailed descriptions of the Italy of poetry, fiction, and artistic research, and with the Italy of the past it has nothing or little to do. The poet, the novelist, the art critic, and the historian have amply dealt with these things: and if the novelist, from whose pages, I believe, the general public gleans most of its ideas concerning the Italians, has but too frequently considered it to be sufficient to give Italian names and titles to characters in his novel who speak, think, and act in entirely Anglo-Saxon fashion, this is indubitably because he, or she, as the case may be, has been psychically unable to divest himself of his Anglo-Saxon temperament before undertaking his work.

Now, this remark will not, I trust, be regarded as invidious, in that it is made by one who has himself ventured to write novels dealing with Italian life. I am quite aware that Brown, having returned from his Italian home to avoid the heat of an Italian summer, will, if he happen upon this book at his club, shrug his shoulders scornfully. Probably, too, he will quote Horace—and he will observe: "Coelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt." I shall not overhear the observation; but, if I did, I should reply that neither Horace nor the present representatives of Horace's race would recognise a single word of his quotation—for the simple reason that he will have the effrontery to pronounce his Latin as though it were English. And this leads me at once to my apology, which I consider to be due not to my English, but to my Italian readers.

There is probably no other people in Europe so given to self-criticism as the Italians. At the same time, there is probably no other people which so bitterly resents criticism from outside sources. This attitude may appear to be illogical, and, perhaps, to be the result of an overweening vanity. But in reality it is not so. The Italian resents, and I think very rightly resents, superficial criticism; and his Latin susceptibilities are immediately aroused by strictures on his customs, character, and morals delivered by those born of a different race and climate from his own. He regards them as not only unjust, but as foolish. He is perfectly well aware that it is an extremely rare and difficult thing for an Englishman or an American to understand his Latin temperament, and the feeling that he is being judged without being understood is apt to make him excessively angry. Perhaps, too, there is another reason for his resentment to foreign criticism. The modern Italian is, after all, the representative of a young and recently constructed nation. He may be compared to an ambitious youth just merging into manhood—but a youth who has already achieved great things, and has achieved them through much opposition and adversity. Fully aware that he has still some of the defects of youth, and that he has still much to achieve, he is profoundly sensitive to what strangers may say and think of him. He can point proudly to his country's career so far as it has gone, and can ask with justice what other people could have done so much in fifty years of existence as a free and united nation. He knows that his bitterest critics are those who are ignorant of the well-nigh overwhelming odds against which he has had to struggle in order to attain his present position — or, worse still, those whose criticisms are envenomed by political and also by religious hatred.

It is these considerations, then, which lead me to "mettere le mani avanti per non cascare"—to adopt the significant Italian phrase—and to offer to my Italian readers an apology for any defects, inaccuracies, or erroneous impressions which this volume may appear to them to contain. These will assuredly be due to the fact that in certain details I have not yet succeeded in entirely divesting myself of my Anglo-Saxon temperament, and that I have therefore fallen into the same errors of judgment as those which I have condemned in others. I have no wish to conceal from them the fact that I shall have occasionally some hard things to say—but I trust that in the manner of the saying of them there will be no offence. Above all, I trust that they will not be open to the charge of being ill-considered criticisms on the part of a writer whose native temperament precludes him from entire sympathy with, if not a complete understanding of, a nation in whose midst he has dwelt for many years, and of a people he has learned to admire and to love.

I must take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to the editor of *The National Review* for his courtesy in allowing me to incorporate in subsequent chapters dealing with the Maffia and with the progress of United Italy material previously used in articles contributed by me to his pages.

CHAPTER II

THE GATES OF ITALY

THE would-be student of Italian life must expect to find himself confronted by a probably unforeseen difficulty. Political Unity is one thing; but Social Unity is quite another. It is precisely the curious lack of Social Unity which is apt to create so many pitfalls in the path of the foreign investigator into the habits and customs of Modern Italy. Indeed, when we talk of Italy, we are unconsciously using a merely geographical expression; for as each part of the Italian kingdom differs in natural characteristics, so each differs from its neighbour not only in the character but also in the traditions and the language of its inhabitants. It would be a strange thing, for instance, were a Londoner to be unable to understand what the inhabitants of, we will say, Manchester or Liverpool were talking about should he find himself taking a walk in the streets of the last-named cities. And yet this is exactly the position in which the average citizen of Rome or Florence finds himself when business or pleasure takes him to Naples, to Bologna, to Milan, or to half a score of other important Italian centres. Italian, of course, is the common language spoken by all the educated classes in the country, and understood by those whose education is little or none. Each city and each great province of Italy has its own dialect, however—and the use of this dialect is by no means limited to the lower orders. A more or less refined edition of it is frequently almost exclusively employed not only by the commercial classes, but also among the local aristocracy, and it often happens that Italian is only spoken when a foreigner or a stranger from another part of Italy is present.

I must here sound a note of warning. The Lombard is proud of his language, and is by no means prepared to admit that it is a dialect. The Milanese, indeed, is not a dialect, but has its own dialects, which are spoken in various parts of Lombardy and especially in the provinces of Como and Bergamo. It must be confessed, however, that the Milanese tongue grates painfully on any ear accustomed to Italian; and though, unlike the utterly incomprehensible Bolognese, it is fairly easy to understand, it is extremely difficult to talk and to pronounce correctly. To speak of the Milanese "dialect" to a Lombard would be an error which he would certainly courteously but firmly correct.

This linguistic difficulty is perpetually confronting us in every part of Italy, from her northern frontiers to her far Sicilian shores. The foreigner who may possess even an intimate knowledge of Italian, and no knowledge of the many diverse tongues spoken in Italy with which Italian has often little to do, will assuredly find himself seriously impeded, not only in his intercourse with the people, but also in his attempts to study their customs and character with any degree of accuracy. Even in those regions where the Italian language is spoken in all its purity and musical beauty — such as Tuscany and the Roman provinces — the dialects used by the lower classes when conversing among themselves are by no means easy to follow, although, unlike the Lombard, Bolognese, Sardinian, and Sicilian, they are in reality varieties of Italian patois. In Tuscany, and particularly in the province of Siena, the contadini's Italian is far purer and more free from dialect than in any other part of Italy. Indeed, many words in common use by them, although no longer employed by educated Italians, belong to the classical Italian of Dante's times; and we may perhaps find a parallel to this at home, if, as philologists assure us is the case, we must go to Essex if we would hear our English tongue spoken as it was in the Middle Ages.

It is obvious that in a country where so much diversity of language exists, considerable diversity of character and customs must exist also; and this, I think, is a fact seldom taken into account by foreign writers recording their impressions of Italy and the Italians. It is for this reason, then, that I am quite unable to settle my readers comfortably down in some city such as Rome, Florence, or any one Italian centre. They must resign themselves to travel with me through the Northern, Central, and Southern portions of the Italian kingdom— though even this vagabond expedition will not, I fear, reveal more than the principal characteristics of these regions. The truth is that in very many districts the inhabitants even of towns and villages within sight of one another vary not only in their language, but also in their dispositions and customs. In more than one instance that I could mention, *paesi* gazing at each other across a narrow stream are divided by elements much more stable than water — by subtle distinctions of character and temperament, by dialect, by hereditary traditions and superstitions, and last, but by no means least, by that instinct which is expressively defined by Italians as *campanilismo*, the spirit which causes the dweller in each little town or village to look down on all individuals who have not the luck to have been born under the shadow of his own church belfry, and to regard them as *forestieri*, or backwoodsmen! Even in Rome, the capital, we have a striking example of this in the quarter of the city known as the Trastevere. The Trasteverini pride themselves on being a different race from the dwellers on the other shore of Tiber; they claim, indeed, to be the sole possessors of the old Roman blood, while the tone of complacent superiority in which a Roman announces "Son' Romano di Roma" is quite unrivalled of its kind. It is quite hopeless, then, for a foreigner to succeed in sifting all the many and complicated ingredients which go to form the Italian race. And here, I believe, we have the true cause of the Italian resentment to foreign criticism. To my mind, he is certainly fully justified in resenting the hastily formed and often entirely erroneous impressions of outsiders as to his compatriots. He knows that he himself is more often than not unable to form a correct judgment, and is fully aware that he is the citizen of a State which, though politically a united nation, is not, and, in all probability, never can be united socially. It is natural, therefore, that he should regard the vague generalities concerning his country which he too often hears or reads, not as criticisms deserving of attention, but as the expression of opinions founded on insufficient observation. I shall ever remember a remark made to me, now many years ago, by a very prominent Italian statesman and savant. "You English," he said, "are always writing books about Italy and the Italians—but it never seems to strike you that there are many Italies and many Italians; and you forget that the plebiscites which gave us political unity and liberty did not at the same time miraculously create a new race."

And so, after these little disquisitions, which perhaps the reader will allow me to ask him to bear in mind until, if he does not cast it aside forthwith, the very end of this volume, we will make our entry into Italy at Turin, which is perhaps, with the exception of the modern quarters of Rome, the least Italian-looking of any of the hundred cities of Italy. Montesquieu described it as "le plus beau village du monde"—but that was in or about the year 1728, when Turin had but recently become the capital of the newly formed kingdom of Sardinia. We have not, as I have before hinted, to concern ourselves too deeply with the past; but a glance at the Turin of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries may not be amiss, since from the overgrown village nestling under the shadows of the Alps proceeded the spark which set the whole of the Italian peninsula in a blaze, and finally secured to the Italians freedom from the foreigners and the priests. On reflection, it is not a little strange that this should be. Modern Italy, although a monarchy, is without doubt the most genuinely democratic of the great countries of Europe. Her monarchical government, however, sprang from the most autocratic, and, in the true sense of the word, tyrannical of all the European courts at that period, not excepting even that of France. In Montesquieu's days, and for long afterwards, the Court of Turin was a miniature Versailles. Not only was the sovereign the centre of a Court numbering nearly four hundred dignitaries of greater and lesser degree, but all ministers and public officials were exclusively chosen from this band. Its members were regarded as eligible for the most important posts in the Church, and took very good care not to allow these posts to be bestowed elsewhere than among themselves or among the aristocracy. The Army, too, may be said to have been exclusively reserved to those of noble birth, since none other could obtain to the rank of an officer. The sovereigns of the House of Savoy, in those days (1713–1730) represented by Vittorio Amadeo II., were absolute despots, maintaining a rigid rule over their little kingdom and over the private and domestic matters appertaining to their subjects. The aristocracy, especially, might have compared with a large family circle dominated by an exacting if benevolent paterfamilias in the person of the monarch, who knew every one's little secrets and dealt out rewards and punishments as circumstances demanded. The etiquette of the Court of Turin was as formal and unbending as that of Madrid. The House of Savoy, however, were ever benevolent despots and wise and enlightened rulers, as well as being astute diplomatists, and their capital of Turin, which in those days only numbered a population of seventy thousand or so, must, if contemporary accounts of its social life and conditions be true, have been a far more pleasant place of residence than the majority of European centres.

But—"sicut erat in principium, et nunc, et semper"—the Church by its greed and persecutions sowed discord in an otherwise happy and prosperous community. In Piedmont alone there were nearly forty thousand priests, and over fifteen thousand monks and nuns. The Church not only had her own courts of justice and prisons, but she was perpetually asserting her right to deal not only with ecclesiastical offenders against her pretensions, but also with matters pertaining to the rights of private citizens. Although by far the most wealthy class in the State, the clergy were exempt from almost all taxation—as, indeed, for a considerable period were the nobles. The latter, however, were comparatively poor, and performed at least some services to their country; while the former merely accumulated ill-gotten riches at the expense of the entire population. Between the nobles and the priests, the unfortunate bourgeoisie was altogether left out in the cold. Nevertheless, from its midst sprang many distinguished writers and thinkers, who immediately fell under the odium of the priests, whose all-powerful influence speedily obliged them to seek the protection of other countries. The more enlightened and progressive doctrines of these pioneers of reform soon spread through not only Piedmont but the whole of Italy; and from such men as Giuseppe Baretti, who emigrated to England, and the historian Carlo Denina, who flung his *Rivoluzioni d'Italia* in the faces of the priests, there flowed a stream of new ideas into Italy which eventually was destined to form the torrent that swept tyranny, both priestly and aristocratic, into the dust-heap of the past. It was a Piedmontese noble, however, Count Vittorio Alfieri, who, late in the eighteenth century, devoted his poetic and dramatic talents to the cause of Italian liberty and consolidation. His works are certainly dull reading to-day; but at the time they were acclaimed with enthusiasm by the Italian public, and throughout Italy the theatre, thanks to Alfieri's foresight in choosing it as the most efficacious channel through which to disseminate liberal ideas, became a political factor more powerful than the numerous secret societies then springing into existence. Even Alfieri, a hater of the monarchical system, had little fault to find with the sovereigns of the House of Savoy as rulers. He declared that their "good intentions" placed them above criticism, and that their rule brought far more good than evil to their dominions. It was the *Re Tentenna*—as he was called on account of his vacillating policy—Carlo Emmanuele III., who after much hesitation finally threw himself heart and soul into the national movement towards liberty, and caused the eyes of all patriotic Italians to turn to the House of Savoy as the race from which the future heads of that united Italy which had yet to be formed were to be chosen.

Montesquieu's village has now a population of over 380,000 and is a stately city enough. The atmosphere of a royal court still clings to it, for various members of the reigning House have their residence here and in the immediate neighbourhood; and Turin, like all the large Italian cities, has a social season of its own. But in Turin, as in Milan, one scarcely feels that one is in Italy. Both cities lack many of the special characteristics which one is accustomed to look for in an Italian town, and with them that peculiar and subtle charm which the majority among them possess, of the kind that one loves to recall in Italy. Turin, particularly, seems to be wanting in associations, while the wide, rectangular streets, so reminiscent of French boulevards, and the spacious *piazze*, are rather oppressive than interesting. The Torinesi, too, have a certain brusqueness about them which is perhaps a trifle disconcerting to one used to the gentler and more sympathetic manners obtaining in the regions farther removed from the Alps. But beneath the surface they are a kindly race, and at the same time an extremely shrewd and hard-headed one. After all, however, what unaccountable and trivial things associations are sometimes apt to be! Now I come to think of it, I am a little ashamed to confess what first stirs my imagination and causes me to feel that I am in the beloved land of Italy when I finally alight at Turin after a tedious journey through the most uninteresting part of France. It is the sight of a couple of smart, good-looking Carabinieri, in their quaint three-cornered hats, pacing leisurely up and down the platform of the railway station. Now, this is absolutely puerile. Moreover, associations in connection with Carabinieri are, as a rule, not given to be of the pleasantest nature. They suggest frictions with the law—heated discussions as to the veracity of some charge connected with one's motor-car, with the almost inevitable sequel of a summons to attend before the local *Pretore* in order to be mulcted of a fine—or, if one is not a fairly respectable member of society willing to conform at least outwardly to its usages, other matters of a more compromising kind. I am perfectly aware of all this, but nevertheless I repeat that when my glance falls on the inevitable Italian Carabinieri after a prolonged absence from Italy, I experience a certain sensation of satisfaction which (and I hope I am not unpatriotic) I never remember to have felt on landing at Dover and seeing the useful if prosaic form of an English policeman.

But we must not linger in Turin, though to pass it by altogether would have been an act wanting in respect to the makers of modern Italy. No doubt the city is still a pleasant enough place of residence; but of this I can be no judge, as my visits to it, though frequent, have been of short duration. Moreover, I must admit that Lombardy has far more attractions for me than Piedmont, and it is in Lombardy that I trust my readers will have the patience to spend some time with me. Naturally, Milan must be our first halting-place; though it is not in Milan that one must look for the charms of Lombardy. There are, to be sure, quiet nooks in the city, in which one may escape for a while from its aggressive noise,—for assuredly it is the noisiest town of its size in all Europe,—and inside the cool Duomo, among its forest of pillars and in its subdued, mysterious light a mortal may find peace. I hope I may not be accused of irreverence, but often have I taken a book—selecting, by the way, one with a sober binding—and enjoyed a tranquil hour in Milan Cathedral—an hour all the more soothing for the turmoil and glare of the streets outside. Occasionally I have been approached by an individual whom I suppose in England we should call a verger, who, with a glance at my altogether secular volume, has no doubt imagined me to be a far better Catholic than I am. He has suggested that I should like to see the shrine of St. Charles Borromeo, the great Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, who lies in splendid state and gleaming with priceless jewels beneath the high altar. But to pay one's respects to the saint entails an expenditure of five francs. Moreover, as the correct Catholic phrase runs, I have no devotion to San Carlo Borromeo. No doubt he was a great man, and a man, too, of splendid courage and full of the spirit of self-sacrifice and charity—towards those who thought as he did. But he was also a very cruel man—towards those who differed from him in matters of faith and politics. Certain of the saint's letters to the Pope, who was also his uncle, smugly enumerating the names of those whom he had caused to be put to death as "heretics" — and certain letters, too, written to the authorities of his vast diocese, in which he complains that heads are falling too scarcely, and executions by fire and otherwise are occurring too rarely—stick in my throat. "It was the fashion of the times," say the apologists, and of course they are perfectly right. All the same, a saint is nothing if not superior to the fashions of his times; and, though I should refrain from saying so to a verger of Milan Cathedral in particular and to Lombards in general, I quite agree with the distinguished historian, Lord Acton, himself a Roman Catholic, who characterised San Carlo Borromeo as a murderer. And so I say gently to the verger that I have already visited San Carlo's shrine, and as he retires he again darts a suspicious glance at my open book. He is evidently not quite sure whether I am engaged in religious exercises or whether it may not be the question of the five francs which is troubling me. I can see him hesitate and look round the vast nave of the cathedral, and I know perfectly well what is in his mind. I am the only *forestiero* in the church—or, at any rate, the only one visible. A few women and a few old men are saying their prayers; and a couple of Milanese citizens are talking eagerly to each other in low voices in one of the transepts, presumably discussing not theology, but current prices. I am unquestionably the only individual within range of the verger's vision who looks like five francs. Presently he returns to my side noiselessly. This time he addresses me in bad French, which annoys me. "As monsieur is alone," he murmurs persuasively, "perhaps three francs." "A thousand thanks!" I reply affably, in Italian. "I will mention your kindness to the monsignore I saw just now in the sacristy." The veiled threat has an immediate and satisfactory effect. In a moment the verger has vanished among the columns. But I must not be unjust. This verger was an exception to the general rule, for the officials of the Duomo of Milan are on the whole dignified personages whom one would be sorry to think exploited for their own benefit the pathetic remnant of mortality wrapped in its gorgeous, bejewelled vestments and lying in its shrine beneath the high altar. Rather does the stranger suffer from the importunities of would-be guides, who fasten upon him without the cathedral doors and offer to show him its treasures. I do not know if these harpies receive a commission on the visitors they bring to San Carlo—and I have no means of knowing, for these little matters are not for the public ear. Knowing, however, the universal functions of the ubiquitous *sensale*, or middle man, in Italy, I should not be surprised or even scandalised were it to be so. Concerning this same *sensale* I shall have something to say later on, for he is a very important factor in Italian life, and blessed, though rare, indeed, is the man who does not sooner or later fall into his clutches. Of course, like all large cities, Milan has its various grades of what is called "society," and until comparatively recent years its *alta società* was a brilliant one. The great and historic Milanese families of the past, such as the Borromeo, Belgioioso, d'Adda, Trivulzio, and several others, are still represented in Milan, and nearly all of them possess large estates and considerable wealth. Rome, however, of late years has naturally become the yearly rendezvous of the Italian aristocracy in general, and the great families, instead of entertaining on the magnificent scale they used to do in their palaces in their native cities, now resort to the capital for the Roman season. The rich Milanese bourgeoisie, on the other hand, entertain largely, and this not only in Milan but also in their villas in the country and on the Lakes. Into whatever grade of society a stranger may enter, he will find an entire absence of formality, and a kindliness which is all the more pleasant on account of its simplicity and sincerity. To be sure, the rapid transition from one language to another, which has always struck me as being more noticeable in Milanese society than in that of any other of the Italian cities, is not a little bewildering to a foreigner who, if he be English, in all probability is but slightly acquainted with any language but his own. To find oneself a guest at a dinner-party, in the course of which Italian, French, English, German, and Milanese are all hurled promiscuously across the table, is, to say the least of it, not a little perplexing to the stolid Britisher who has been brought up to think it bad manners to talk across the table, and whose notion of conversation at dinner is limited to dividing his attention between the ladies on either side of him. A topic begun, perhaps, out of compliment to you in English, is caught up by your neighbour in French, flung back at you from the end of the table in Italian, given a sudden and disconcerting twist in German or Milanese, until the whole affair resembles nothing so much as a hotly contested game of tennis in which the ball must on no account be allowed to drop. But there is a "go," and at the same time a simple bonhomie about it all which disarms British shyness, and is very refreshing when compared with, we will say, German efforts at entertaining a stranger. After all, however, these things are the result of temperament—and if the German temperament is more given to formalities, the kindliness and hospitality of its owner are not the less genuine and well-meant. As to an English dinner-party, I confess that in the matter of conversation I sadly miss the give and take and the amusing sallies which can only exist when, as in Latin countries, the conversation round the table is general. One never experiences that dreary thought, so paralysing to the brain, of "Good heavens! what can I talk about next?" when all possible topics have been exhausted with the neighbour on one's right, and the British standard of what the books on etiquette call "table manners" precludes one from joining in the conversation taking place elsewhere. And one is certainly spared the sight of that agonised look so often to be seen on the face of an English hostess when a pause is becoming perilously long, as well as the gallant *banalité* with which the most courageous among the guests comes to his or her hostess's rescue.

The Milanese gentlemen are, as a rule, keen sportsmen, good shots, and still better riders; and as many among them have plenty of money they can afford to gratify their hobbies. With a few exceptions, however, the greatest wealth is to be found among the upper bourgeoisie, to which Milan owes her commercial and industrial importance. Very many of the families belonging to this section of society are of Swiss and German origin; and, indeed, German capital and German goods are almost aggressively prominent not only in Milan but in every part of Italy. As to the Milanese populace, it has, no doubt, its virtues and its vices like any other—and of the latter, an increasing fondness for strong drinks, and especially for the pernicious spirit known as *grappa*, is an unpleasing feature. Probably the climate is to some degree responsible for the intemperate habits of the working-classes in Milan. It is, to say the least of it, a trying climate—for in summer the temperature in Milan is almost always higher than in any other Italian city, and it has happened to me more than once to leave Milan in the dog-days in a state of limpness from the enervating heat, and to find Rome, and even Naples and Palermo, cool and bracing in comparison. In winter the atmosphere has a peculiar cold rawness which seems to penetrate the marrow of one's bones, while very often the city is enveloped in a clinging white fog resembling a curtain of damp cotton-wool. Unluckily, the spirit-drinking Italian, whether of the north or the south, usually pays bitterly for his folly. His warmer blood, it may be supposed, cannot stand any habitual abuse of alcohol, and the penalty he pays is too often that most terrible one of tuberculosis and, it must be added, insanity. So rapid has been the increase, especially in the north of Italy, of tubercular and mental diseases, and so convincingly has this increase been proved to be due to alcoholism, that the matter had occupied the serious attention of the late Italian Prime Minister, Signor Luzzatti, who had prepared a measure whereby the present appalling proportion of *osterie* and places where intoxicating liquors are sold may be reduced to more reasonable limits. As things stand at present, the proportion of such places is, in Milan, one to every one hundred and twenty inhabitants of the city, while in Rome it is almost as large. Fortunately, both Rome and Milan are exceptions in this matter, for the Italians as a whole are probably by far the most sober people in Europe, and drunkenness is regarded with disgust by the average Italian. It is not, moreover, only the deleterious effect upon the race, but the vast number of homicides and *fatti di sangue* for which alcoholism is responsible which made the late wise and philanthropic Prime Minister eager to grapple with the question so far as the law can deal with so subtle and menacing an evil. There already exist in Italy many societies for the promotion of temperance among the lower classes which are doing excellent work, while all the most distinguished doctors and surgeons are unanimous in preaching abstention from spirituous drinks on the part of those who would keep themselves healthy and transmit their good health to their descendants. It is much to be wished that the priests would preach the same useful doctrine! But unluckily they do nothing of the kind. The religious festivals, on the contrary, are the cause of far more drunkenness and crimes of violence than they are of sober and peaceful living; and the priests themselves, in very many instances, set anythingbut a good example to their flock, since it is their custom to celebrate their holy days by long and heavy feasts, during which an enormous quantity of wine and other drinks are often consumed, and the effects of which are sometimes very apparent when the reverend fathers reappear among the faithful.

Now, I am quite aware that in venturing to say this I shall be at once accused by my English critics as writing with a preconceived bias against the clergy. May I say at once that I am accustomed to this accusation! I have invariably found that if I have in any novel of mine given to the best of my powers a description of a good Italian priest, such a character has passed unnoticed by the critics. Whereas, whenever I have had occasion to portray, I believe with equal fidelity, a bad specimen of the type, I have invariably been supposed to be actuated by prejudice or hostility to the Roman Church, and to have been writing "with a purpose." I frankly admit that in this volume on Italian life I *am* writing with a purpose, and that this purpose is precisely similar to that which actuated my novels dealing with the same subject—namely, to present my readers with as true a picture of that life as my pen and my competency will allow of my doing. Neither qualifications, I fear, are sufficient to enable me to do justice to my subject; but at least I can say with truth that if I have erred in my portraiture of the Italian clergy, my errors are shared in common with the very large majority of Italians of all classes, from whom, far more than from my own personal observation and experience,—although I believe I have had somewhat more opportunity of studying the methods of Italian ecclesiastics than falls to the lot of most foreigners,—I have preferred to derive any impressions I have ventured to put into print. The fact is that we in England see the very best side of Catholicism—the true and genuine side—and, whatever our own religious opinions may be, the Roman Catholic clergy in our own country have taught us both to admire and respect them. Unfortunately no one, Catholic or Protestant, who has lived long in Italy and with the Italians can honestly assert that the clergy in that country are either admired or respected as a body; and no one, I think, unless he have eyes that see not, and ears that hear not, can be long in Italy without realising that this want of respect is by no means due merely to irreligion or hatred of the Church.

Let us change this seamy subject, however, for the present, and return to our Milanese. Apart from her commerce and her ever-increasing industries, there is a feature of Milanese life which is a very remarkable one. It is not to be found in the workshops, nor in the world of society, and it is altogether unobtrusive. The visitor to the bustling city, whose inhabitants appear to be entirely concentrated in their own affairs and on the engrossing business of money-making, may not be aware that Milan possesses an enormous number of charitable institutions, some of which are not only extremely richly endowed by legacies which have been handed down from the Middle Ages, and which are being perpetually augmented by modern bequests, but are also admirably organised and managed. There would seem, indeed, to have been no limit to the charitable and humanitarian spirit of the Milanese in past centuries, and it is a curious fact that even in the days when the most appalling outrages against humanity were regarded as comparatively insignificant details of everyday life, large sums of money were being constantly left for the benefit of the sick and the suffering. The Ospedale Maggiore at Milan, for instance, is one of the finest and most completely equipped hospitals in the world, and constantly over three thousand patients and out-patients are treated by its staff. But Milan is not satisfied even with this institution, and the Cassa di Risparmio, or popular Savings Bank of the city, has just (February 1911) voted the large sum of twelve millions of lire to be applied to providing the hospital with a new building capable of containing two thousand beds, and to the perfection of its various medical and surgical equipments in accordance with the most recent scientific discoveries. This magnificent donation, it may be added, is intended also to commemorate the fiftieth year of Italian Unity. But the Ospedale Maggiore is by no means the only important charitable institution in Milan, and there are few cities in which the sick and the poor are so well cared for. In all the principal towns, too, of the ancient Milanese Duchy, a similar spirit of charity towards, and sympathy with, distress may be found.

While we are dwelling upon this subject I should like to mention a curious detail, of the existence of which I believe many Milanese are themselves unaware. In the famous theatre La Scala—which, with the San Carlo at Naples, is the largest opera-house in the world—there is a mysterious box immediately above the stage on the fifth tier which appears to be always unoccupied. As a matter of fact, however, this box is never empty when opera is being performed. Screened from the gaze of the public, the most appreciative of all among the audience are following every note of the music from its recesses. Men and women sit in that box entranced — transported temporarily into another world, a world in which they can forget that they are not as the majority of their fellow-creatures, and are able, if only for a few hours, to feel that no dark and hopeless veil exists between them and the rest of humanity. They are all blind, the occupants of this box. Some sixty years ago a Milanese lady, who was the proprietress in freehold of a box in La Scala, bequeathed her rights to the then Archbishop of Milan, and the archbishop made them over to an asylum for the blind on the condition that the box should for ever be devoted to the exclusive use of its inmates. In order that these should enjoy to the full the intentions of the donor, the directors of the theatre accorded to the blind tenants of the box the privilege of free entry into the theatre—a grant in itself sufficiently generous, since in all Italian theatres an entrance fee of sums ranging up to five francs is demanded in excess of the sum paid for the place occupied. I wonder if any spot in the wide world

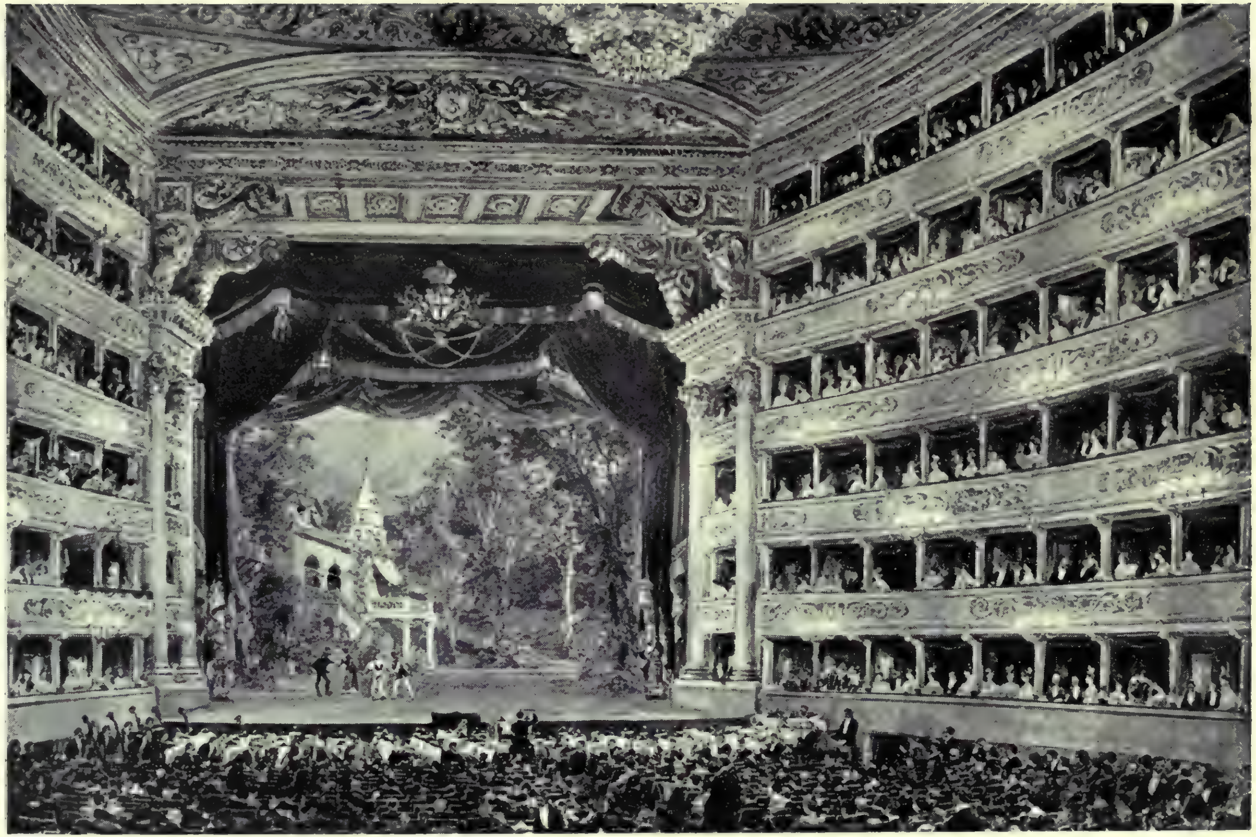


Photo [*Brogi.*

LA SCALA.

contains so much concentrated happiness as this box in La Scala on an opera night. The blind are sent there in rotation, so that all the inmates of the Institution may have one or more evenings bliss in the course of the season. To them an evening at the Scala is an evening spent in Paradise. That they cannot see what is passing on the stage appears to concern them not at all. The music takes entire possession of their senses, and in some mysterious way seems fully to supply that sense in which they are lacking. Who shall say that the ear, trained with a bitter training, does not succeed in annexing to itself something of the powers of vision? I leave this problem to the scientific; but whatever its solution may be it is certain that the blind listeners to opera at La Scala seem to be fully conscious of every action passing on the stage. They will lean forward eagerly and hold their breath just as you or I might do at a critical moment in the drama. I say as you or I *might* do—but in all probability we should be guilty of no such exhibition of emotion. We have seen all these things so often; but the blind have only heard them! Between the acts, too, the occupants of this box will fall to discussing critically, and even passionately, every detail of the opera—the rendering of every famous passage and even the action of the singers. They seem to be ever under the spell of the music, even when the orchestra is silent and the musicians have disappeared, and are completely indifferent to the fact that they are in a brilliantly lighted theatre and surrounded by a crowd of fellow-creatures. And of all music, that of Wagner appeals to them the most.

They will listen with placid enjoyment to operas by other composers, but deep is the disappointment if Wagner is not included in the repertoire of the season. A Wagner opera is looked forward to with feverish impatience; and the mighty harmonies and deep, tender melodies, especially in such works as the three principal portions of the *Ring*, have the effect of sending this poor blind audience into what can only be described as a kind of ecstatic trance. I think that such a convincing proof of the magic power of Wagner to appeal by sound alone to the profoundest emotions of the human temperament may be regarded as a fairly conclusive reply to those whose nature lacks the responsive chords which alone can respond to its touch, and who for this reason assert that his music largely depends upon spectacular effect for its influence on the masses. Perhaps, after all, it is not to the happiest or to the most prosperous that Wagner most forcibly appeals —and herein lies the true power and significance of his music. In the case of our blind friends at Milan, I am told that the slightest hint on the part of the authorities at the asylum at depriving an unruly inmate of his or her "Wagner night" at La Scala is sufficient immediately to quell any attempt at insubordination. I have often wished, when thinking of the blind members of a La Scala audience, that some systematic series of experiments might be made as to the influence of music on those suffering from physical pain and disease, and also on the insane. I fear, however, that an advocate of any such measure would be regarded as being himself only fitted for a lunatic asylum—or at the best as an intolerable "crank." But all this is by the way, and has nothing whatever to do with Italy.

I should strongly advise any stranger who has exhausted the sights of Milan—who has "done" the Duomo, the various churches, and the Brera picture-galleries, and is weary of observing Milanese life as represented by the idlers who at all hours of the day and night congregate in the vast Galleria and in the *birrerie* and restaurants adjoining it—to make friends with some one who can procure him permission to visit one of the great dairy-farms in the neighbourhood of the city. Such an establishment as that at Locate Triulzi, for instance, a small *paese* some six or seven miles distant from Milan, well repays an expedition thither. Like many other vast farms of the kind in Lombardy, it is owned and worked by a company, and a considerable amount of capital is invested in it. Everything is conducted in the most scientific and up-to-date manner; and the scrupulous cleanliness and regard for all sanitary precautions are a pleasure to behold. In these Lombard dairies, which not only supply the most excellent milk and butter to Milan itself, but export them, the butter especially, in large quantities to foreign countries, are to be seen no dirty, greasy milk-tins such as convey our English milk, and probably a good deal else besides, to its consumers. Every receptacle for the dispatch of dairy produce is subjected to rigorous disinfection and sterilisation, and hermetically closed against the invasion of foreign germs. Machinery, wherever practicable, takes the place of unwashed hands; and where, as in the process of milking, the direct contact with humanity is unavoidable, every care is taken that the humanity should at least be clean; while great attention, too, is paid to the keeping of the cows in healthy and fitting surroundings. These dairies dispatch their butter in any quantity by post to even the most distant parts of Italy—and any one who, like myself, happens to live in a remote country district of Tuscany, where pasturage is practically non-existent, and sweet, fresh butter, therefore, hard to obtain, appreciates the luxury of receiving it once or twice a week in its spotlessly clean boxes, for which, in the hot weather, sterilised and hermetically sealed tins are substituted. But besides milk and butter, enormous quantities of cheese of many varieties are made and exported to all parts of the world, while poultry, and eggs by the million, find their way from Lombard farms to the British markets, which surely, were it not for British improvidence and want of initiative, ought not to be compelled to go so far afield to purchase them. This particular dairy-farm of Locate Triulzi has various *succursali* in Milan — and let me strongly advise any of my readers who may come to realise that to pay two francs at their hotel for the, as a rule, stale *caffè-latte*, butter, and scanty supply of rolls that are brought to their bedrooms in the morning is an insult to their common-sense, to rise half an hour earlier and breakfast at one of these little establishments. They will be well and quickly served, and everything is scrupulously neat and clean; while for less than a third of what they pay in their hotel they will be able to breakfast off the richest and purest of milk, from which the cream has not been abstracted, the freshest of rolls but a short time out of the oven, the sweetest of butter, and, if they wish, eggs which were inside the hen that same morning. I hasten to add that I am not a shareholder either in the Locate Triulzi Dairy or any other, and I only mention this establishment as typical of many similar Lombard institutions.

These *latterie* are much used by the Milanese for their early morning meal; and certainly the quality of the fare is far preferable to that provided by the hotels, while, as I have pointed out, the economy is considerable. Perhaps, as I have mentioned the word economy, this will be the moment to attempt to combat the idea, firmly rooted in the minds of most English people, that Italy is an economical country in which to live. Never was there a more mistaken idea, at any rate so far as the Italy of the present day is concerned. Alas, I speak from personal experience; for in the course of the last ten or fifteen years the cost of living has more than doubled itself, and in some ways it is far cheaper to live in London than in even a country district in Italy. As to Rome, and the Italian cities generally to which foreigners resort, these have become extraordinarily expensive dwelling-places. I am not, of course, alluding to the cost of the hotels, which is necessarily extravagant and in some cases prohibitive, except to those who do not care how much they spend, but to the expenses of daily life, which any one who wishes to reside in the country must expect to encounter. On the English and American sufferers from the high prices for inferior articles at present obtaining in Italy I am not inclined to waste any sympathy.

Like Georges Dandin—*ils l'ont voulu*! The Italian is only now beginning to find out that the English and Americans belong to different nations, and this discovery is still limited to the tradespeople and men of business of the large towns. The general idea that an *inglese* wallows in riches is as deeply rooted in the mind of the average Italian as the idea that Italy is a place in which to economise is one of the most cherished beliefs of the average Englishman. This lamentable misapprehension of the real state of the case on both sides is, I am convinced, the cause of much heartburning, and also of much indiscriminate and hasty judgment on the part of the British visitor—or shall I call him victim? The original offender, however, has undoubtedly been the *inglese.*

As far back as a hundred years ago, and no doubt long before, the English milord would make his periodical descents upon the country, accompanied by his retinue of servants, his carriages and horses, his couriers and his cooks. He flung his gold about and bought largely—and he also bribed largely in order to have things all his own way. Not very long ago, while looking through some old papers in a certain English country-house, I came upon memoranda of the expenses of a journey to Rome, undertaken by its proprietors of that day with a view to spending the winter in the Eternal City. The cost of that journey alone was fifteen hundred pounds! Imagination reels at the thought of what the family must have spent in Rome during that winter. They were great people, certainly, and a proper amount of state when travelling was in those days considered to be necessary to rank and importance; but they were in no way exceptional, and many such *pezzi grossi* from foggy England must have astonished the Italians by their methods both before and since. But the traditions left by the English milord of a hundred and more years ago have never perished in the Italian mind. They have been handed down from father to son, and it is of no matter if the English milord of the present day is usually a modest and often impecunious person who has no desire to pay more than his fellow-creatures, and who is quite content with a bedroom on the third floor of his hotel, instead of a suite on the first. I firmly believe, however, that these pestilent traditions were in a fair way to decay, had it not been for the American invasion of Italy. For the English milord there was an excuse, and it was not the excuse of mere riches. He had, probably, to maintain the state and dignity of high rank, and of a name well known in the Italian society he frequented. The American, on the other hand, has nothing to maintain except a reputation for dollars. By degrees it was beginning to dawn on the Italians that English people, even though they might be of noble birth, were not necessarily rolling in riches. Moreover, the English themselves were beginning to adopt a more sensible attitude, and not to allow themselves to be fleeced simply because of their nationality. Unluckily, however, the American appeared upon the scene; and, more unluckily still, he talked a language not to be distinguished from English by the ordinary Italian. In the eyes of the last he was the re-incarnation of the milord of their fathers; and, indeed, it has happened to me on more than one occasion to be asked for information concerning "un grande milord americano—ma proprio un signorone," who had evidently committed some intolerable act of stupidity in paying a fabulous price for a picture which both I and the dealer who questioned me well knew to be comparatively worthless. Now, I have no fault to find with mere stupidity. We have all of us displayed it in our time. What I resent is vulgar stupidity—the paying of exorbitant and dishonest prices for no other reason than to impress the spectators with the length of one's purse. So long, too, as our American friends confine themselves to the bric-à-brac shops and to the purchase of works of art, they are fairly harmless. It is not the American tourist, be he millionaire or not, who plays the—well, plays havoc with Italian honesty, but the American resident. In whatever part of Italy he plants himself he demoralises the people by his insistence on going, at all costs, "one better" than his neighbours, which means that he will readily pay double for any article he may require, whether that article be a butler or a chicken. The worst of it is, too, that his reputation has not followed but preceded him even into remote country districts of Italy, such as that in which I dwell—districts in which—shall I say, mercifully?—he has never yet been seen in the flesh. In Rome, for instance, his vagaries are astounding. It is as well rigidly to avoid all shops and other places where they sell with which the Americans deal. It is as well, too, never to take an Italian servant who has been in the employ of *Americans* or *English*. Last year I had occasion to part with a lad of sixteen or seventeen who performed the humble though useful duties of kitchen-boy in my Roman establishment. He asked me to give him a letter to an American resident who required a similar servant, which I very readily did. He returned some hours afterwards and informed my butler that he had got the place, and informed him also that his wages were to be seventy francs a month, and extras. With me he received thirty francs a month, and considered himself handsomely paid—and seventy francs, I may mention, are the monthly wages of a well-trained butler. Naturally, my own servant must have wished that fate had taken him to an American, instead of to an English *padrone*, who happened to know Italian ropes—but I am bound to say that he never even hinted at this feeling, but merely observed, with a compassionate smile, "Mah! gli americani — si sa!" I had a suspicion that my ex-kitchen boy might have been, so to speak, pulling the leg of his former chief, so I took an opportunity of asking his new employer if he had really increased the boy's wages to such an extent, for in my letter of recommendation I had mentioned the sum I gave per month. The boy had not lied; and I have little doubt that if I had told my American acquaintance that he had received forty francs a month in my service, he would instantly have given him a hundred. On the other hand, there is no one so parsimonious in the matter of tips as the average American. I remember on one occasion at Cadenabbia I was waiting to go out in my boat on the lake, while the boatman whom I always employed was engaged in carrying up to the first floor of the Bellevue Hotel hecatombs of heavy trunks belonging to one of the very wealthiest men in the United States who had just arrived with his family. In about half an hour my boatman returned to me considerably exhausted, though he was a young fellow of remarkable strength. One of his shoulders was badly cut and bruised by the iron-bound corners of the millionaire's trunks. I made him sit down and rest in the stern of the boat while I took the oars.

Presently he held out his hand to me with an amusing smile, and in its palm lay—three copper coins. "What are these for?" I asked wonderingly. He laughed outright. "They are for me!" he replied. "Signor —— has just given them to me for carrying up his luggage from the steamer."

That the Americans are very largely responsible for the continuance of the deplorable error that all *inglesi* have only to put their hands in their pockets to pull out gold and bank-notes is indisputable; and, as I observed just now, this error is in its turn responsible for a great deal of very unfortunate misunderstanding not only on the part of the Italians, but also on that of we Anglo-Saxons. It is perfectly natural that, smarting under a sense of having too often been "done" by a native of Italy, the Englishman is apt to infer that the Italians are by nature dishonest in their dealings. Let us consider the question for a moment from the Italian point of view. In the first place he has heard from his youth upward, and his fathers have heard before him, that the *inglesi* are the richest people in the world, and that money is nothing to them. I verily believe that many among them are convinced that London is a city displaying the same deplorable vulgar characteristics as those attributed, we will hope erroneously, to a far more sacred locality, and that its streets are paved with gold. In the next place, he has seen for himself, and his fathers have seen before him, that the *inglesi* (for how can he differentiate between them and the *americani*?) more than live up to their reputation. Is it to be wondered at, then, if he tries to benefit by the good fortune the gods have thrown in his way? It is of no moment whether the article he may have to dispose of be a sham Raffaele or a real cauliflower. If its would-be purchaser be an *inglese*, he will ask treble its value, or more, and he will in all probability get what he asks. He makes his demand in the honest conviction that not only does it not signify to the *inglese* how much he pays, but that it is right and fitting he should pay more than if he belonged to any other race. A Frenchman or a German, for instance, even if he be known to be a *gran signore*, is never asked the same prices as an *inglese*, who may be known to be of a far humbler station in life. Now, I contend that this is not dishonesty, but that it is an engrained custom, born of tradition, and carefully nurtured by that very race which is its principal victim. You cannot deliberately encourage and educate a people to act according to a certain idea, and then proceed to accuse them of immorality because they do so. I am not, be it understood, upholding the commercial honesty in general of Italian life. I greatly fear that were I to do so unreservedly I should not be faithful to my subject, and that Italians themselves would be the first to shake their heads more than dubiously. Where money passes, Italians are not given to demonstrate any remarkable confidence in one another—unless they thoroughly know their man. I am merely venturing to suggest that in their daily dealings with foreigners the Italians are very much what the foreigners have made them—and that the modern Italian is very much what the American has made him.

There is, however, another side to the picture, and one that I believe has come into evidence only within the last few years. It is of exclusively English painting, and with it the Americans have nothing at all to do. Rigid in his adherence to his own national tradition that Italy is a country in which he can economise, the Englishman, I think, has never yet recognised the fact that the Italy of to-day is not the Italy of the days when his father and his grandfathers made the grand tour, or shut up their houses at home in order to save a year's income or so in Rome, Florence, or Venice. He cannot realise, or perhaps does not know, that so costly has the scale of living become in Italy during the last twenty years as to hit very hardly all but the wealthiest Italians, and most especially the small tradespeople on whom, if he be anything but a mere tourist in the country taking his ease at his inns, he will find himself most dependent for the comforts and necessities of his daily life.

Far from displaying the careless prodigality which caused the Englishman of even five-and-twenty years ago to be regarded by Italians as a combination of a gold mine and a lunatic, his more modern representative is now apt to feel aggrieved if he cannot obtain all he wants at prices which may have been current in Italy previous to 1870, but certainly have ceased to be so for a considerable period. He still, it is true, will pay exorbitantly for *objets de vertu* and works of art which may take his fancy in the antiquity shops; but he expects to be provided with the necessaries of everyday life, and with the produce of industrial labour at prices very far below those he would cheerfully pay in England. It is quite in vain to tell him that conditions have changed in Italy; that labour in all its branches demands, and is obliged to receive, far higher remuneration in order that the labourers may not starve; and that the cost of food and of every article produced by labour has risen in proportion to the increase of wages. He overlooks the fact that the working-classes have to meet an increase in their daily expenditure quite as large as, and often, indeed, far more oppressive than his own case—that their food is taxed as heavily as his, and that a very large proportion of their earnings go to pay the enormously increased house-rent which the serious lack of accommodation for artisans in the towns, and for agricultural labourers in the country has entailed upon them. No—he has been brought up to regard Italy as a cheap country. He has read that it is so, and, therefore, cheap it must be. That he finds it exactly the reverse is due, in his opinion, to barefaced extortion on the part of the Italians. Now, I am quite prepared to admit that when an Englishman first settles in Italy every man's hand, financially speaking, is against him, and that for reasons which I think I have sufficiently explained. But when he has bought his experience he will, provided that he be willing to lay aside his British exclusiveness and consort with the people among whom he has elected to dwell, find that a firm and good-humoured disclaimer on his part to be treated as an *inglese* will be productive of satisfactory results, at any rate so far as his dealings with his tradesmen are concerned. As to his possible dealings with the Italian bureaucracy, or with Italian justice, I fear that I cannot guarantee him any such happy issue out of his afflictions. All that I can hope is that he may not have occasion to transact any but the most trifling business with either of them—but on this subject I shall have more to say later on. Unluckily, when we English have taken a fixed idea into our heads, it is extremely difficult for us to get it out again; and the average Englishman settled in Italy certainly shows no exception to the rule. He continues to expect food to be sold to him, and work to be done for him at prices often absolutely unfair to the providers. "Why,"—I have heard him exclaim indignantly—"I should pay as much for this in England!" Precisely, my good friend. And you are lucky if you do not pay more than you would in England! The days are long passed, and will never return, when you received twenty-seven and twenty-eight lire instead of twenty-five and a few centimes for your English sovereign; and the days are passed, too, when an Italian lira could buy as much as a shilling. At the present time it can

Photo] [Alinari.

ON THE LAGO DI COMO.

only buy some twenty-five to thirty per cent. less than it could a dozen years ago, and who knows how much it may still further decrease in purchasing value in the near future?

Vain arguments! Italy is a cheap country to live in—and if it is not, it is the fault of these "damned Italians."

I may tell you, my friend, that these damned Italians, as you call them, would be only too delighted if your imaginary prices were those which they themselves were under the necessity of paying. You are a quarter of a century behind the times, and are suffering under a very painful delusion, largely due, I am afraid, to writers of fiction whose knowledge of Italy is based on hotel life at so much a head per day. Resent extortion as much as you like and can, but for Heaven's sake be fair to the Italians. Try to realise that for them, too, everything has risen in price, and that, though the nation is richer and more prosperous than it ever was, individuals have become poorer in proportion to the increased struggle for existence which is yearly becoming more severe. In this present year in my own neighbourhood the people have to pay a lira and a half for a flask of local wine which last year cost sixty centimes, an increase of more than cent. per cent. on an article which is not a luxury, but, to the Italian working-man who eats little meat and does hard manual labour, far more of a necessity than beer is to his English comrade. Other necessities of life have increased in price in proportions which, if not so alarming, are at any rate alarming enough, though, in the case of wine, the present enormous increase in price is probably of a temporary nature, and due to the general failure of the vintage of 1910 throughout Italy, as well as in France, who largely depends on the rougher Italian wines for "blending" her own clarets and burgundies.

I must apologise for this long excursion into the dull realms of household economics; but I have frequently been surprised, and sometimes a little indignant, at the way in which many of my compatriots who have lived long enough in Italy to know better deliberately refuse to recognise the altered conditions of the people among whom they dwell, and who assuredly cannot be blamed if circumstances compel them to meet increased liabilities by raised prices. I believe that the entirely detached lives, led in the miniature England which they have brought with them, accounts for this refusal on the part of the great majority of English residents to expel from their minds certain worn-out traditions regarding Italy. As a rule, they are not on sufficiently intimate terms with their Italian neighbours of their own class to be able to discuss household problems with them, and their Italian domestics are not, perhaps, always a trustworthy source from which to derive information and advice. The German resident, on the other hand, adopts a very different policy. He sets himself, with all his indomitable perseverance, to the task of making himself thoroughly acquainted with the language, thereby acquiring a most indispensable asset which our Englishman often contemptuously dismisses as superfluous, and, indeed, is apt to regard as in some way derogatory to his dignity as a

British subject. Having made himself at home in the Italian tongue, the German proceeds to make himself at home with the Italians. He studies their customs and their character, and no detail of their lives is too insignificant for his attention. Nor does he pursue his studies among one class only, but, if his circumstances permit of his doing so, he establishes friendly relations with all classes. The consequence is that, although the German is not nearly so sympathetic to the Italians as the Englishman, he succeeds where the latter fails. Personally, I would far prefer to take the opinion or advice as to things Italian of a German who had lived five years in the country to that of an English resident of forty years' standing.

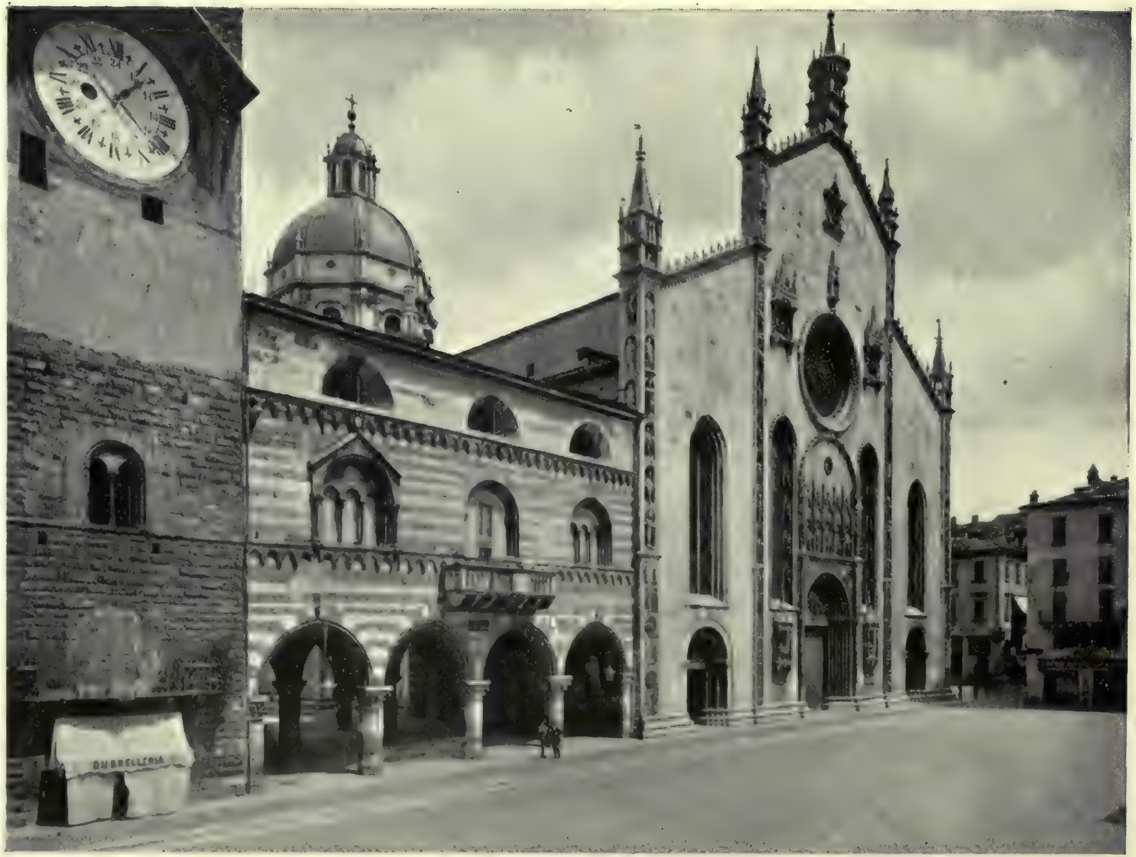
CHAPTER III

SKETCHES IN THE COMASCO

I FEEL sure that my readers would feel themselves aggrieved if, being in Lombardy, I did not take them to the Italian Lakes; but, if they wish to make a reading tour through that delightful district, I must refer them to other pages than these. Como, Maggiore, Varese, and Lugano, which is not, of course, correctly speaking, an Italian lake at all, are household words with the British traveller. As, however, we have to choose between them, let our choice fall upon Como, since not only is it incomparably the most beautiful, but also because the Comasco district presents far more interesting and more typical details of Italian life than the others. Its past history and traditions are well-nigh inexhaustible, and take the student back into the very earliest times—for there are innumerable traces of civilisations long dead, and of pagan customs still surviving under a mask of Christianity, to be found in many of its villages and towns as well as among its lovely mountain passes. Like the south of Italy, the Comasco had its ancient Greek colonies established in its midst, and as in far Campania and Calabria the beautiful Greek type is still occasionally to be met with among its population, while several of the little towns on the shores of the lake preserve their Greek names scarcely concealed under an Italianised form. The origin of the city of Como itself is lost in antiquity; but we know that the Etruscans dominated the whole district for more than six centuries, having found already in possession a more ancient people still, whose traces have entirely vanished from off the face of the earth. We know, too, that to the civilised Etruscans succeeded the barbarous Celtic conquerors, who were in their turn vanquished and expelled from Como by Julius Cæsar and the might of Rome. Afterwards, as most visitors to the Lake of Como know to their cost, that intolerable bore, the younger Pliny, appears upon the scene—a worthy person with a nice taste for scenery and for the simple pleasures of a country life, and, in common with very many other individuals of his day, possessing to the full that spirit of benevolence and humanity which is erroneously supposed to be the exclusive product of Christianity.

A very charming people in many ways are the Comaschi, especially the peasant populations of the hill villages who have not been spoiled by contact with the tourists frequenting the shores of the lake. Their chief defect is, I am inclined to think, too great a sympathy with the wine flask, and excessive drinking is a common failing in these parts. Nevertheless, there are countless exceptions to the rule, and in no district of Italy do I know more trustworthy people, or any in whom the instincts of loyalty and fidelity to those with whom they have once made friends are more remarkable, unless, indeed, it be among the Abruzzesi. And what more pleasant little city can be found than Como itself, nestling under its green mountains? One has no feeling of being overwhelmed by its "sights," though some of these are of considerable interest. The beautiful little cathedral is perhaps the most perfect specimen in all Italy of a fusion of the Gothic with the Renaissance styles in architecture. I must refer my readers to the guide-books regarding its history and contents; but perhaps I may be allowed to quote from a volume of my own dealing with the Italian Lakes, and to mention a medieval practical joke connected with the cathedral of Como, concerning which I believe all guide-books are silent.

In the year 1850, a certain priest at Introgna, a village not far from Locarno, on the Lago Maggiore, declared that he was possessed of an ancient document indicating a spot in the Duomo of Como where a buried treasure might be found, and that this spot was precisely beneath a sculptured frog, which may be seen to this day among the elaborate and graceful carving which surrounds the northern doorway of the building. It is a frog, by the way, of peculiarly hideous appearance. The priest prevailed upon a master-builder of Como to search for the treasure, and this individual consented to do so on the condition that the priest would show him the document, and that the necessary permission to excavate was conceded by the authorities. The priest at once produced the paper in question. It was carefully examined by competent experts, and was declared to be a genuine document bearing the



Photo] [*Alinari*.

THE CATHEDRAL, COMO.

date of, I think, 1470. Its contents were as follows:—

"A treasure is to be found in the city of Como. Whoever shall find a carved frog, and shall dig beside it to a depth of eight *braccia*, will find an iron chest full of silver; digging further, he shall find another chest containing a corpse; and digging further still he shall come upon yet another chest containing gold."

On the strength of this mysterious document, permission was given by the authorities to excavate at the spot indicated, on the condition that half the treasure, were it found, should be consigned to the municipality. The work was begun early in May 1852, and was carried on for a whole week amid the intense excitement and curiosity of the Comaschi of all classes. Unluckily, however, nothing was discovered except a spring of very excellent water, and amidst jeers and hisses from the disappointed crowd the search was abandoned. The document, however, found by the priest seems to have been absolutely genuine so far as its age was concerned, and must be regarded as being presumably a practical joke of the fourteenth century, which only reached its maturity nearly four hundred years after conception.

It is hard to believe, when looking down on the peaceful Lake of Como from any vantage-ground among the mountains which encircle it, that its waters were in the Middle Ages often the scene of fierce naval actions, and that pirate vessels harried the villages along its shores. The descendants of the pirates, of whom "Il Medeghine"—Gian Giacomo de' Medici—was certainly the most famous as well as the most romantic, are now engaged in the less truculent, but I dare say equally exciting, trade of smuggling, of which a great deal is done on and around the lake. The close proximity of the Swiss frontier must make the temptation well nigh irresistible to convey contraband articles such as spirits, tobacco, sugar, and salt into Italy; and one cannot help feeling some sympathy with the delinquents when one comes to think of the cost of such necessaries of life in their own country. The Italian Government, in addition to many patrol boats manned by custom-house officials, maintains a few torpedo-boats on the lake, which occasionally steam furiously after some suspect. At one point, too, a powerful electric search-light is in constant use, at the cost, it is said, of a hundred francs a night. I have often amused myself with watching the vagaries of this search-light, and by mysterious evolutions, practised with my own innocent boat, drawing its attention to my doings, I have noticed, moreover, that its full blaze ruthlessly pursues any boat which may contain an amorous couple from the various hotels, who are presumably engaged in enjoying the romantic effects of a moonlight night on the waters of Como, and certainly these effects are sometimes very romantic indeed, as any of the boatmen will tell you.

But it has occasionally struck me that the guardians of finance are not always actuated by an active, if indiscreet, curiosity regarding the behaviour of lovers. Many a time have I seen one of the peculiar boats used by the country people creeping stealthily in the shadow of the rocks towards some sequestered creek from which a path leads up into the mountains, or perhaps to some cave in which a smuggled cargo may be temporarily hidden away. I have often observed, too, that the broad track of the search-light somehow seems to sweep across the lake in every direction without actually illuminating the spot where the said boat happens to be. Now, this is very curious, for the two rowers of the boat are evidently working hard. They row standing up, and my own little craft is near enough to them to enable me to see and admire the graceful motion of their bodies as they bend forward and then straighten themselves for another stroke. All the same, the inquisitive search-light is frequently turned full upon me; but with a sudden twist, which betokens great dexterity on the part of those controlling it, it invariably skips over the heads of my neighbouring oarsmen to cast a dazzling glare on the water some hundred yards in front of them, and far beyond the spot for which I have reasons of my own for imagining to be their destination. I am not going to give away professional secrets confided to me by some of my Comasco friends in humble life who, although they themselves held aloof from the smuggling trade, had many relations and friends among its members; but one little incident which was recounted to me with glee the morning after it occurred I think I may mention without indiscretion, as it happened a good many years ago, and no doubt would now be impossible, or perhaps, I should say, exceptional! A heavy and fairly valuable cargo of tobacco and sugar had been successfully brought over the mountains from Swiss territory to the Lake of Como, and was about to be deposited in a certain spot which it is unnecessary to name here. Unluckily, or perhaps luckily for the smugglers as events turned out, on arrival at the hiding-place they found a *brigadiere di finanzieri* and a comrade of lower grade already in possession, who informed them with the utmost calmness that an informer had, so to speak, given away the show; that he knew the contraband cargo was an *affarone*, and that if any resistance were offered he had only to give a signal and others of his men would be quickly upon the scene. I conclude that something in the non-commissioned officer's manner—possibly a wink (though that, by the way, is a surmise)—caused the smugglers to hope that things might not be so black as they looked. However this may have been, after a few minutes' discussion the majesty of Italian law unbent. The *brigadiere* and his companion kindly assisted the smugglers in reloading their boat with its cargo, the *brigadiere* meanwhile carefully checking every sack of sugar and package of tobacco. Eventually the two *finanzieri* accompanied the smugglers in their boat to a remote *osteria* in a spot which again shall be nameless, where, over a few measures of wine, the claims of the Italian Government were settled in a manner satisfactory to all parties. Needless to say, the alleged proximity of other members of the force was an invention on the part of the *brigadiere*; but in any case, he and his subordinate had the advantage of being armed, which the smugglers were not. Whether the matter ever reached the ears of the authorities I cannot say, but I should imagine not, as for some little time afterwards smuggling was certainly carried on with increased activity in that particular neighbourhood.

It is a demoralising trade, however, and the self-respecting members of the community keep themselves apart from it, though I do not imagine that even the most punctilious among them are above benefiting by a successful *coup*. "Lavora di notte" is the innocent phrase intended to convey that a man is a smuggler; and I have no doubt that many tender-hearted ladies and others who are not acquainted with its real significance give an extra tip to their poor boatman who not only rows them about all day, but also works at night!

Unfortunately, the ill-gotten gains of the smugglers are also, as a rule, ill-spent; and much drinking in company with the least desirable of the population is the usual mode of expenditure, leading to quarrels, in which the knife may be the immediate, and prison the eventual, result, though in the country villages and towns on Como the knife, happily, is very rarely known to make its appearance, and only then in the hands of some *pessimo soggetto.*

To me the life of "the people" in the Comasco is far more interesting than that of the *signoria.* There are, of course, numerous and great exceptions; and in the case of several, at all events, of the great Lombard families who possess stately villas on the lake it would be hard to find in any country more interesting and charming individuals, nor any who combine in the happiest manner greater simplicity and absence of "airs" with the high-bred manners and courtesy inherited together with ancient and historic names. Existence in these villas is made as pleasant and informal as possible—although no doubt it would not content the average English person, who would at once ask: "But what is there to do?" Well, there is very little to do besides that which any intelligent person can make for him or herself. At least there is always employment for the eyes and the ears and also for the head, if one chooses to use it. There is not, certainly, anything to kill, unless it be a fish, and even this is unlikely, except in seasons when the villas are, as a rule, uninhabited. Personally, I find it a relief to live in a country where one is not expected to kill something most days and to listen to other people talking about what they have killed. As to exercise, that British fetish, rowing and long expeditions on foot among the hills and valleys, when the thermometer is in the eighties Fahrenheit, cause the skin and, for aught I know, all the other organs of the body to act healthily—and this, I suppose, is the primary boon the fetish is expected to confer. Provided, however, that other parts of oneself are well occupied, one can very well, I think, put the fetish away even for a long period, and set him up on his pedestal again when necessary. He is, I am the first to admit, a far more satisfactory idol than his substitute, the British pill.

Life indoors, no doubt, is preferable to spend with the *signoria*, and this for many obvious reasons. Outdoor life, however, not only in the

Comasco but in every part of Italy, I have generally found more full of interests when passed among the people. Perhaps this is merely because I am a foreigner; but I am by no means sure that I do not often find the same thing in England—I am quite sure that I do find it in Scotland. And in the Comasco more than in many districts the lives and occupations of the people vary greatly. There are the people who earn their livelihood from the waters, and those who earn it from the land; and both are well worth studying. Both, moreover, are usually delightful companions, rarely presuming on that companionship, but maintaining a kind of courteous independence which seems to imply not so much equality as incapacity to take a liberty or to receive one.

The Comaschi, perhaps, have not always the smoothness of tongue and the refinement of manner which the Tuscan peasant knows so well how to assume. There is something of the roughness of the North about them; but of the two I think I would rather trust the Comasco. Of course, it is necessary to pick one's company—and I by no means intend to convey that every member of the working-classes will be found to be either an interesting or a desirable acquaintance. Far too much sentimental nonsense is written (not, I hasten to add, by Italians) concerning the charms of the Italian peasant. He is commonly represented in novels as a kind of hero brimming over with noble and refined instincts. Such portraits do infinite honour to the novelist's gift of imagination, but they are not portraits of the Italian peasantry, or, it may be supposed, of any other. The fact is that the peasantry, like many other things in the country, has changed enormously in the character and qualities of its members, and the Italian peasant is far from being the disinterested individual who figures in the pages of fiction. He is, on the contrary, exceptionally shrewd, keenly alive to his own advantages, and certainly not troubled by scruples of conscience as to what means he employs to further those advantages at the expense of his employer. The times are past when peasant families lived for generation after generation on the lands of the proprietor, regarding his interests as more or less identical with their own, and when their sons and daughters who did not till the ground became faithful and devoted domestic servants to their *padroni.* The constant subdivision of all property has put an end to that state of things, and nowadays the peasants, when not owners of a small piece of land themselves, migrate hither and thither as the demand for their labour may occur. Occasionally, it is true, one may meet with some peasant, even of the young generation, who is not only extremely intelligent, but also unites with his intelligence good looks and a refinement of manner and of ideas which many among his superiors might be glad to possess. If one is fortunate enough to come across a specimen of this kind he forms a pleasant and interesting companion on a country expedition, and much that is useful may be learned from him. But he is an exception which, unluckily, seems to become more rare every year. Socialistic ideas have largely permeated the

Italian peasantry; and though the peasants have been shrewd enough to realise that socialism, if put into general practice, would be very much against their interests, and have become far less amenable of late years to socialistic agitators, they have absorbed many of the pernicious delusions which these have put into their heads regarding social equality and the like; and although, as a rule, they are too wary to parade their opinions before the *signoria*, when among themselves they are apt to give vent to assertions which, were they not so mischievous, would be amusing, owing to the ignorance they display. One does not, however, come across the socialistic peasant nearly so frequently in Lombardy as in Tuscany, and especially in that least civilised of all the Tuscan districts, the province of Pisa. "Pisa, vituperio della gente!" The Pisano, indeed, uncouth, ill-mannered, and ill-conditioned in most ways, fully deserves the dislike he has incurred from other Italians generally from the days of Dante to the present. But we shall see more of the Pisani later on, so for the moment we will return to the far more attractive Comaschi. One of the principal industries of the province of Como is the manufacture of silk, and in most of the peasants' dwellings the silk-worm is an important occupant —and a far from savoury one! It is, I think, among the hands in the silk factories that one finds the least pleasing types of the population; but this, of course, is usually the case when workers at indoor trades are brought into comparison with workers in the open-air. In good seasons, when the hot weather sets in at the proper time, the silk-worms conduct their functions with proper punctuality, and contribute a considerable addition to the precarious income of the peasants who may at any moment see crops and vineyards scorched and blackened by the sudden and terrible hailstorms which occasionally visit these districts. When a bad hailstorm threatens, there is anxiety indeed among the peasants, who are often also the owners of the land. It is impossible to say what track the storm may take; and very often a narrow strip of country, a mile or more in length, or a single vineyard of a few acres is devastated, while the ground immediately adjoining is left scathless. The hailstones, moreover, sometimes take the form of jagged pieces of ice several inches in length. One storm in particular, which did appalling damage in the course of a very few minutes, I well recollect, for I had only just time to get to shore in my boat when it swept up from the Lake of Lecco. The inky blackness which seemed to descend almost to the surface of the water, and the hiss of the descending hail that increased to a veritable roar as the storm approached, were not a little alarming, and never did I feel more thankful than when my boat had gained the refuge of the *porto* at Cadenabbia. A steamer was crossing the lake to Bellagio, and encountered the full fury of the storm. The man at the steering-wheel had his hands and arms severely cut and lacerated by the hailstones, and had it not been for his jacket, which he took off and threw over his head, he would in all probability have been stunned, if not worse, by their force. In half an hour the sun was shining again, but the storm, which was very local in its track, left a piteous scene behind it of crops irretrievably ruined and vines stripped of their fruit, as well as a record in broken windows and damaged roofs.

The majority of the foreign visitors to the Italian Lakes hurry away from them at the first approach of real summer, while those Italian families who have villas on their shores seldom come to them before the end of August, and then only stay at latest till the middle of October. And yet to appreciate the full beauty of this district it is well to brave the heat of the summer months, which, it must be confessed, is often intense, though a cool air is usually to be found on the water.

This the time when, accompanied by some trusty guide in the person of a peasant or a boatman who knows the paths, a moonlight night spent in ascending one of the mountains, so as to be at the summit a little while before the dawn, is an experience which will dwell long in the memory of those who have the energy and the good sense to seek it. Nothing can be more beautiful or impressive to any lover of Nature than to gaze on such a scene, for instance, as I have witnessed from the summit of one of these Como mountains at the sunrise of a July day. The gradual ascent from the lake, at first through sweet-smelling vineyards to chestnut woods, and afterwards across the higher pasture-lands, is fascinating enough; and every now and then one turns to look below one at the placid lake lying like a great shield of silver, and at the mountains beyond it bathed in a soft, shimmering haze. But the coming of the dawn is the most wonderful sight of all. I recollect on one occasion seeing the Lake of Como still gleaming under the mellow rays of a harvest moon, while that of Lugano was flushed red with the glow of the rising sun—a sight not easily to be forgotten. Far away, too, over the Lombard plain the white marble pinnacle of Milan Cathedral could be seen—a mere rosy speck in a sea of purple mist. It was as well, perhaps, that both I and my companion had thoroughly enjoyed those magic hours between the night and the day, for the descent to the lake when the sun was already high in the heavens was anything but enjoyable. We took a wrong track, and more than once found ourselves in places where to advance would have meant broken bones, and perhaps necks, and to retreat was not always easy. Finally, after hours of scrambling, during which I am afraid I added to my vocabulary of Comasco oaths, we found ourselves on the Lugano instead of the Como side of the mountains, with a long and weary walk of some dozen miles or more along what my companion insisted was a path, but which I am convinced was nothing but the dry bed of a torrent. My feet were blistered by the rocks, which also cut to ribbons my boots—a far more serious matter—and my nose was blistered by the sun to such an extent that I feared for several days afterwards that I might be supposed to be addicted to that vice which I regret to say Italians are apt to imagine is indulged in by the great majority of my compatriots.

The peasants' houses throughout the Comasco and in Lombardy generally are tolerably good, except in the mountains, where they are often little better than ill-built sheds. Overcrowding is common everywhere, with the result that many diseases are contracted which might be avoided. But this is a defect to be met with all over Italy, in towns and country alike, and the problem of the housing of the working-classes in accordance with hygienic principles is now a very serious one. Twelve is no uncommon number for a peasant family, and even twenty persons living together in a very limited space is not unknown. Unlike the peasants of Tuscany and the central and south of Italy, the peasants of the north are by no means the healthiest among the population, and the pellagra, which is due to eating polenta made of musty maize, is still prevalent in certain districts; although this terrible disease has been greatly diminished of recent years owing, largely, to the spread of co-operative bakeries in the various small towns and the more general use of properly made bread, which is gradually displacing the polenta.

The great plain of Lombardy is, of course, the most extensive, as well as the most fertile portion of the old duchy, and this fertility is greatly due to the wonderful system of irrigation, without which the soil itself would certainly not produce the rich and numerous crops for which it is famous. As far back as the twelfth century the Cistercian monks of the great abbey of Chiaravalle in the neighbourhood of Milan introduced the system, which gradually was adopted all over the Lombard plain; but it was not until the Austrian rule that it attained the elaborate proportions which are now to be seen on all sides. Vast fields of rice, trefoil, flax, and other crops are flooded at will, and can thus resist the drought of summer. I believe the total cost of these irrigation works, as they exist to-day, has not been far short of two milliards of francs—and there is a significant Lombard saying to the effect that, "Chi ha prato ha tutto."

Properties are large on the Lombard plain, and individual farms, while often of a thousand acres or more, are regarded as small holdings if they be under three hundred. The Métayage system is largely, but not by any means entirely, in vogue. As I have said before, dairy-farming is everywhere a most important industry; and it is usually calculated that a farm of fifty acres will easily support the same number of cows, and very often more. When, as has occurred in good seasons, as many as ten crops of hay have been taken off a single meadow, it will readily be understood that certain holdings will bear a large head of stock in proportion to their size. Indeed, were it not for heavy taxation, the Lombards should be one of the richest and most prosperous people in Europe—but the *crux* lies there!

I must not, however, dwell any longer on these dry details, otherwise I may expose myself to the same criticism as the clergyman who took as the text for his sermon—"Now, behold, all these things I have told you before!"

As is invariably the case in mountainous countries, the Comasco is full of legends and superstitions, and has a considerable folklore. In certain parts a belief in witchcraft still lingers; but, fortunately, no active steps are taken against suspected witches. In former times, however, and even late in the eighteenth century, witches did not escape the same barbarities as were practised upon them in other countries, and notably at that period in Scotland. Lezzeno, a little village just above the shores of the Lake of Como, was supposed to be particularly infested by *streghe*, and the authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, combined to stamp out the evil by adopting measures which are better left untold—so revolting was their cruelty. No doubt Lezzeno owed much of its ill-fame to its peculiarly gloomy and sinister position; and, indeed, the place is still regarded with something like aversion by its neighbours.

> "Lezzeno della mala fortuna,
> d'Inverno senza sol, d'Estate senza luna,"

is an ancient couplet which is always repeated in connection with it, and the couplet is true enough, since the sun never shines on the village throughout the winter months, while on summer nights when every other *paese* is bathed in moonlight Lezzeno lies in sombre and mysterious darkness. Formerly the place would seem to have been of greater importance, since our friend San Carlo Borromeo established a commission of the Holy Inquisition there which committed atrocities to the full as shocking as those perpetrated by the witch-hunters. While we are on the subject of atrocities, however, I think none can equal in grimness an episode which occurred, not in Lombardy, indeed, but in the neighbouring Venetian State, and this as late as

1705. In these days passion-plays existed, and one of these representations was usually given in connection with the celebration of the feast of Corpus Domini. It is recorded that on this occasion the procession of the Host was followed by a so-called "car of Purgatory," in which, for the edification of the faithful, twenty living infants were thrown into the flames and burned to death. To any one who knows how deep, and even exaggerated, is the love of Italians for children, and how this passionate affection is too often the ruin of the children themselves, such a horror as this would appear to be impossible. The fact, however, has been substantiated, and can only be regarded as another proof of how religion degenerated into superstition may be responsible for the most barbarous crimes against humanity.

The modern Comasco, fortunately for his welfare and progress, brings comparatively little superstition into his religion, and is beginning to look upon miraculous Madonnas and the stage property of the priests generally as what they really are—namely, means of extorting money from the pockets of the ignorant or credulous, and of maintaining influence over the female portion of the community. Nevertheless, many traditions and practices are still observed by the peasants which have lost the sinister significance which they had in ancient times, and which are now merely picturesque and harmless survivals. Such, for instance, are the bonfires which on the Eve of St. John twinkle on the mountain-sides throughout the midsummer night, around which young couples perform certain time-honoured rites, into the ultimate scope of which it is not necessary to enter, and of the significance of which, moreover, they are themselves completely unaware. These Beltane or Baal-fires are, of course, lighted in honour of the Christian saint and not of the pagan deity. The truth is, that any one who is sufficiently interested in these matters to investigate their origins will find, possibly to his dismay, that there is not a single festival of the Church, and scarcely a single detail of the ritual of the Church, which is not directly derived from pre-Christian religious observances; and if he will bear this fact in mind, many things in Italy which puzzle and perhaps shock him will be made clearer to him. It can never be sufficiently remembered, at all events in Italy, that the Popes merely stepped into the place of the Pontifex Maximus and the Roman Emperors, and that in the Madonnas and saints, in the ritual and the observances of Catholicism, we are merely confronted by old acquaintances wearing masks more suitable to the present needs of society.

Nor, perhaps, need this fact be a disturbing one to the faith of those who are capable of realising its full significance.

It has always been said, though it is very difficult to know why, that the Italians are a lazy race. I am quite sure that they understand the art of idling better than any other people—at any rate than any people north of the Alps. But I have no hesitation in saying that the Italian working-man, whether he be peasant or artisan, as a general rule works far harder while he is about it than any other. Moreover, he is about it for many more hours in the twenty-four than would be tolerated by his British brother. The peasant's day frequently begins in the spring and summer months at 2 a.m., and he continues working till eight or nine o'clock, when he eats, and takes at the most an hour's rest after his meal. He works again till midday, and from two o'clock till the Ave Maria, which in the summer months is not till eight o'clock in the evening. He can hardly be blamed, therefore, if on his *feste* he thoroughly enjoys his repose, for he has certainly earned it—though these *feste* are apt in certain parts of Italy, and especially in the south, to occur too frequently, and so are conducive neither to the public good nor to the public morals. In the long winter evenings, too, when out-of-door work is impossible, the more thrifty of the peasantry often provide themselves with some occupation by which they can add a little to their earnings. It is not uncommon, too, to find among the younger men an intense craving for learning; and I have sometimes been surprised at the books I have found in their houses—books which bore evident traces of having been read not once but many times. I do not know that this desire for information is so remarkable among the northern peasantry and working-man as in central and southern Italy—but some of my friends among them have often showed me their literary treasures, and amongst these history books and historical romances seem to be the most valued. A great source of amusement, and one that often takes an instructive form, are the gatherings round the wood fire on winter nights, when each man in turn will tell a story. The range of these stories is large; for while some are recitations, often delivered in quite a dramatic manner, of facts historical or otherwise, some are improvisations. The last not unfrequently are strange combinations of folklore and weird legends, probably handed down by word of mouth through the centuries. Sometimes they deal with love, but more often with stirring deeds; while, in the case of the Comaschi, smuggling adventures and hairbreadth escapes from the *finanzieri* are not unnaturally a popular subject. But whatever the subject of these improvised stories may be, there is almost always a vein of poetry running through them which is very attractive. All over Italy this custom of telling stories to while away the long winter evenings prevails; and the recruits for the army carry it with them to their barracks, where the soldiers sit in a circle and repeat, no doubt with a home-sick feeling that *al paese* the same thing is being done, the tales they have heard so often in their native villages. But the Roman Campagna has been the place where I have had reason to be the most astonished at the literary tastes I have found in a class in which I should certainly never have looked for their existence. Of all beings, one would never suspect a Sabine or Abruzzi shepherd of being a student of Dante, of Leopardi, of Tasso, and, to come to our own times, of a poet who was certainly greater than either of the two last—Carducci. Yet tattered volumes of all these poets I have seen produced from the mysterious depths of a shepherd's mantle; and I have heard extracts from them recited by heart with no audience but the sheep, a couple of the great white Maremma sheep-dogs, and myself, to listen to the reciter. I can scarcely believe these men to have been a great exception, for it has happened to me several times, in different parts of the Campagna, to be astonished and edified by similar students in the wilderness, and I have wondered what my impressions would have been had I heard Shakespeare recited by a shepherd among the Cheviots, or on the Westmorland fells. One attractive young fellow I remember well, and I have often wondered what his eventual career has been, and whether he was destined every winter to bring vast flocks of sheep down from mountain pastures among the Sabines to the dreary though fascinating Roman Campagna, returning again to his native *paese* when the summer heat set in. He was but two- or three-and-twenty, but splendidly made; and with his superb good looks and bearing might have been one of the Greek statues in the Vatican come to life. I feel convinced that if Ouida could have seen him she would have woven around him one of her most poetic romances. The savage dogs guarding his sheep were my introduction to him, for I was riding, and had ventured too near the flocks. The half of a *toscano* cigar—of which I invariably carry a good supply in my pocket when wandering about the Roman province, as they are more welcome and in very many cases less offensive gifts to shepherds and *butteri* than money if one has need of their services to protect one from dogs or cattle—cemented the acquaintanceship, which was renewed on several subsequent occasions. My shepherd friend discoursed so easily, and yet so simply, on various authors and poets, as well as concerning matters relating to his own particular occupation, that I could not long resist the temptation of asking him why in the world he was not doing something more suitable to his tastes than shepherding. It appeared that his family were at one time well-to-do peasant farmers living on their own soil, and that for a year or two his father had sent him to a college at Cività Castellana with a view to his studying to be an advocate.

Two brothers had served in the army, and he was therefore exempted from doing the same, and had looked forward to making a career for himself. But evil times came. His family suffered reverse after reverse, and his father could no longer afford the money necessary to keep him at any school. Finally, the land had to be sold, and from being employers the family had to become employed, and so—he was a shepherd! I fear he was something of a revolutionary as well, for he certainly dwelt with keen appreciation on Carducci's writings of that period when the poet-philosopher had not yet fallen under the spell of the House of Savoy, or recognised all that the Monarchy had done and was doing for Italy. But he was at least a mild revolutionist, and spoke with horror of anarchist theories and proceedings. I imagine, nay, I know, that many an intelligent lad belonging to his class, whose family was possessed of a small capital, has been compelled to abandon studies for which just at the most critical moment his parents were at great sacrifice to pay, and to sink back into the condition of a contadino, when Nature seemed to have created him to play some far more important rôle in life.

And this, perhaps, is an opportune moment to mention a feature of modern Italian life which is becoming more and more remarkable as education spreads among the lower orders. Almost incredible efforts are made by families in very poor circumstances to send some boy who promises to make the speculation likely to prove a successful one to be educated for the medical, legal, or engineering professions; and to have a son who is a "studente" is a great feather in the cap of a peasant proprietor or an *operaio* who is gaining good wages. Formerly, such a lad would probably have been told that he must become a priest, and support his family by the proceeds of the altar. This is still the ambition of many contadini, and, probably, is the reason why the Italian clergy as a body are regarded with so much dislike and suspicion by the majority of Italians. Too often, the boy who is sent to be trained for the priesthood has no vocation whatever for that office. He embraces the career for motives which are purely mercenary. Nor is he entirely to be blamed for this, since from his earliest childhood it has been instilled into him that to be a priest is emphatically "good business," and that money is far more easily to be gained in this way than from following the plough. Nowadays, however, a young fellow of spirit, and, it may be said, who possesses self-respect as well as intelligence, does not at all approve of the idea of becoming one of a body whose methods are perhaps too well known to him. He is quite aware that by taking such a step he would sink rather than rise in the estimation of his friends, and in his own.

And so, if it has been decided by the family that his brains justify the outlay, its most intelligent lad is sent to study, if possible, in the capital city of the province, where, unless he goes utterly to the bad, the chances are that he will become sufficiently well educated to enable him, when he has completed his term of military service, to enter one of the universities and gain his footing as a doctor, an *impiegato* in some Government or municipal institution, a lawyer, or in some other profession which will lift him out of his natural sphere. The consequences of this ambition on the part of the working-classes to escape from their social condition and to enter professional life are beginning to be far-reaching. Not only has competition for posts of all kinds become enormous, but the growing feeling among the working-classes that manual labour is derogatory, together with the temptation to emigrate to other countries, and especially to the Argentina and Brazil, has caused a dearth of agricultural labourers generally, to the detriment of the land. The overcrowded state of all professions, too, renders it almost impossible for any but a very small proportion of those desirous of entering them to succeed—I am omitting, of course, the military profession, as this is the least popular of all, and only a small percentage of conscripts who enter the army do so with any wish to continue in its ranks a day longer than the law requires of them—in making a career for themselves. The result is that thousands of so-called students, whose lives would have been far more happy and useful had they not been brought up to consider that they were too good to follow their fathers' trades, find themselves with no occupation, and possessed, perhaps, of a superficial education which only makes them discontented and disappointed members of society. They are apt, therefore, to become mere adventurers, grasping eagerly at any chance mode of making a few francs which will enable them to "tirare avanti" and to cut a respectable figure in that condition of life into which they have been transplanted. Honesty is very often thrown to the winds in the face of the dire necessity to live; and this undoubtedly accounts for the widespread corruption and untrustworthiness to be found in Italian professional life, which Italians themselves are the first to recognise and deplore.

It must by no means be supposed, however, that there is not another side to the picture. Some of the most respected and distinguished men in all professions are of peasant origin, and many a peasant lad or the son of an *operaio* has risen by his own merits to be either famous or, at any rate, of repute in the line of life he has adopted. We may assume that such as these would in any case have risen from the ranks, since genius or talents of a certain order are bound to find an outlet. But, when all is said and done, they remain the exception, in Italy as in other countries, and it is not from exceptions that we must judge. The truth is, that the large majority of the sons of contadini and working-men are prompted rather by purely mercenary motives to abandon their natural calling than by any exceptional talent; and it is such as these who, when the competition they have to confront proves too strong for them, find themselves neither, so to speak, fish, flesh, nor fowl, and are driven by circumstances to employing unscrupulous and corrupt methods to gain their livelihood, thereby bringing the character of their compatriots for professional dishonesty into still greater disrepute. Probably, however, the failures would not be so many, and the standard of professional rectitude would be higher, if it were not for the fact that discipline is practically an unknown factor in the Italian educational system. It is, indeed, a factor which is usually lacking in the relations between parents and their children; and the first real example of it which the average Italian boy experiences is when he enters the army or the navy. In the universities, and in other educational establishments generally, the student is treated as seriously as though he were already a man of the world. His boyish ideas and caprices are taken into account as though they were matters of grave importance. If he refuses to obey orders, or if those orders and regulations are inconvenient to him, he forms an agitation committee among his fellow-students, and institutes a strike! Teachers and professors tremble; the Press advertises the folly; and perhaps, if the heads of the youthful heroes become sufficiently swelled and disorders occur, the troops are called out, and questions are asked in the Chamber of Deputies! The use of a birch-rod, or, in the case of rioting, of the fire-hose, would seem, in the majority of cases, to be more appropriate to the situation. As it is, the students have almost always the best of it, and the notoriety given by the authorities and the Press to their childish outbreaks adds to their sense of importance and renders them less amenable than ever to discipline.

In the mountainous region of Lombardy, and indeed in all parts of Italy, emigration drains away a very large proportion of the able-bodied youth of the country.

It is not uncommon, indeed, to find villages in which only old and infirm men and small boys represent the male portion of the population, any young fellow possessed of ordinary health and strength being either serving his time in the army or trying to earn a living abroad. Such a state of things would at first appear to be very detrimental to the country generally—but fortunately the emigration, at all events, though certainly injurious in one way, is beneficial in another. The sums of money remitted by the emigrants to their families at home are very considerable, for the Italian rarely forgets his duty to his parents, and that the folks left at home should be the first to benefit by his earnings in foreign parts is usually his predominating desire. Moreover, the emigrant seldom absents himself from home for many years. He invests none of his savings in the country to which he has emigrated, and therefore has few or no ties in that country—and this, of course, is all to the ultimate benefit of his native land. Two years is the usual duration of his exile; and there are many emigrants who return even from America every year. This is especially the case in the province of Lucca, where a yearly voyage to the Argentina or other American States seems to be regarded as a trifle. All the same, so much yet remains to be done for agricultural Italy—so many vast districts are suffering from scarcity of labour—that it would seem regrettable that so large a tide of emigration should flow out of the country even temporarily. But one social problem infallibly leads to another. It is the fashion to account for the enormous Italian emigration by supposing it to be due to the heavy burden of taxation the lower orders have to support. This, however, is merely a secondary cause—nor do the labouring classes suffer so much from taxation as is imagined by foreigners. It is not they who are the chief victims, nor is it, in proportion, the landed proprietors, but the small tradesman and the *piccola borghesia* upon whom it weighs the most heavily. Excess of population, and, more than all, the great competition which, as I have mentioned before, is one of the features of modern Italian life, are undoubtedly the primary causes of emigration. The former, indeed, cannot be counted as an evil in any country which is able to meet its demands either at home or in its colonies. The latter, it may be feared, is far more injurious, in that it is largely a spurious form of competition, due in a great measure to the spread of education among the working-classes. Now, Heaven forbid that one should deplore the spread of education among any class of a population! To do so would be to range oneself on the side of the priests, —at all events the Italian priests. Unfortunately, however, the better educated an Italian of the lower orders becomes, the more discontented does he become with his surroundings, and the greater his eagerness to emancipate himself from them. Naturally a democrat, he wishes to take part in the democracy, and hence his desire to enter professions for which he is very often totally unfitted—not, very likely, from want of technical knowledge, for this his quick intellect has enabled him to acquire to a certain degree, but from want of that hereditary training which, in ideas of justice and honour, when all is said and done, counts for much when a man is called upon to fill a position of trust or to command other men. That these ideas are not implanted by education alone is amply proved by the state of any country which is unfortunate enough to allow itself to drift into being governed by a bureaucracy. And here, I think, we English may pause and ask ourselves whether bureaucracy is not the invariable result of all ultra-democratic principles when these are carried into effect. In these days, when it is so fashionable to be a democrat, the question would seem worth the asking.

CHAPTER IV

IN TUSCANY

I SUPPOSE that if all the books which have been written about Tuscany by Anglo-Saxon writers were collected, they would fill the shelves of a fairly large library. I will not be so presumptuous, therefore, as to hope that I can say anything new on the subject, at any rate so far as Tuscan history, art, or scenery are concerned. I trust, however, that I have already made it clear that such matters lie outside the scope of this volume, and that its only object is to describe the characteristics of the modern Italians, their ordinary everyday life, and the social conditions and surroundings which influence that life.

Tuscany, more than any of the Italian States now forming the United Kingdom, has left its impress on the mind, if not on the character of the nation. It is here that the *idioma gentile* is spoken in all its purity, and with all its grace. It is here, too, that the refining spirit of Art and the illuminating spirit of Science were born again and went forth to redeem a world only then emerging slowly and painfully from the barbarism and superstition of the Dark Ages. Through long centuries Tuscany has had an influence on Italy which Imperial Rome never possessed even in the zenith of her power, and which Papal Rome, with the exception of brief intervals when members of the House of Medici occupied the chair of St. Peter, in vain attempted to destroy. That this influence was a purely intellectual one, and that its power consisted in its being so, need scarcely be said. Even now Florence regards herself as the Athens of Italy; though whether she has any longer a special and distinct claim to do so may be an open question, since Rome, Naples, and indeed almost all the chief cities of the kingdom possess their own intellectual centres. I do not propose, however, to ask my readers to stay any length of time with me in Florence. I have no doubt that the vast majority of them are far better acquainted with the place than I am. Moreover, I must admit that, much as I love Tuscany, I do not greatly care for Florence, and for Florentine life I do not care at all. Its people are charming, of course—and amiability and pleasing manners are by no means confined to the upper classes, but may be equally met with in all. Nevertheless, sincerity is certainly not the strongest point of the Florentine; and it is as well not to rely too much upon his affability. He has one besetting temptation—and this, I must say, he shares with Tuscans generally. The "prendere in giro" of a friend or acquaintance is to him a diversion which he can rarely forbid himself. I really do not know how I can express the phrase and the diversion otherwise than by using the vulgar translation of "pulling the leg" of a person. Now, leg-pulling is cultivated by the Tuscans to such a degree that it

Photo] [*Alinari.*

FLORENCE.

has become a positively artistic proceeding, and the art lies in performing it with such subtlety that the victim is not only supremely unconscious of the process, but, metaphorically, purrs with pleasure under its infliction. Very often this "prendere in giro" is harmless enough. Sometimes, too, it is even beneficial, since it is frequently exercised as a corrective to "airs" or other objectionable qualities displayed by the victim. Occasionally, however, it passes the bounds of kindness and good taste, and the unfortunate individual exposed to it is held up to ridicule none the less cruel because he or she is unaware of what is going on. This diversion, as practised by the Florentines—but not so much by those belonging to the *alta società*—is apt to be less good-natured than in other parts of Tuscany, and perhaps it is also practised with less subtlety; for, its objects being usually *forestieri*, it is often carried to a pitch which would instantly betray itself to any Tuscan, who would be very prompt to resent it. I confess that I have sometimes felt somewhat indignant when I have seen some unlucky foreigner made the butt of this pastime, and have often longed to enlighten him, or her, as to what was passing. I have learned by experience, however, that it is better to leave people to discover certain things for themselves. It is very curious how this love of leg-pulling is implanted in the Tuscan nature; and I imagine it largely accounts for the very remarkable peasants and other heroes and heroines who figure in Anglo-Saxon novels and books of travel dealing with Tuscany. I am sorry to say that I have heard the charming peasant boy or girl who has been questioned by an enthusiastic traveller in search of "copy" boasting of how successfully he has "preso in giro" such an one to a keenly appreciative audience, and I must admit that I have not always been able to refrain from joining in the consequent merriment—for often the descriptions of the process are extremely humorous. But the leg-pulling, as I have already said, becomes infinitely more artistic when it is performed at the expense of another Tuscan, for it is then apt to display a delicate subtlety which is truly admirable. Of course, one must be to a certain extent behind the scenes of the village life to understand, for instance, the veiled innuenda contained in the improvised stornelli which have so pastoral and romantic an effect as the summer breeze wafts them to our ears from the vineyards in which the singer is working. One must remember, too, that the breeze wafts them to other ears as well—and herein lies the sting of the stornello! I recollect on one occasion how the vocal efforts of two or three peasants working in the fields called forth expressions of delight from some English friends who were with me. The singing was so charming, so poetic, they declared, and they insisted on sitting down to listen to it. A young Tuscan friend of mine who was with us looked at me and I at him in some dismay; for, as a matter of fact, the refrains in question were of a nature to bring blushes to the cheek of a Carabiniere!

The English of the party, however, were perfectly content with the performance, being under the impression that they were listening to amorous swains pouring out impassioned love-songs as they dressed the vines, and so, indeed, they were, but of a very far from edifying or poetic kind. Many, of course, of the traditional stornelli are charming so far as their sentiments go, though the notes to which they are sung are, as a rule, extremely monotonous, and lack the musical element so attractive in the Romanesco and Neapolitan popular canzoni. It is the impromptu stornelli of the Tuscan peasants which are apt to be of more than doubtful propriety; and in them, if one only happens to have a clue to the lesson they are intended to convey to some listener in a neighbouring cottage, or to some fellow-toiler a few hundred yards away, one may assist at a very typical performance of leg-pulling.

As to Florentine social life, I suppose it all depends on one's own tastes whether or not one finds it interesting. It is largely a tea-party life—and that, when all is said and done, in a provincial town. The society is small, and its view of life in general is small also. There are clubs, of course, for the aristocracy and the upper bourgeoisie, and much gambling takes place in both. The club life of the former seems chiefly to consist, when not gambling, of standing at the street entrance and commenting on the passers-by. The spectacle of a group of dissipated-looking young men, and of old men who ought to know better, idling away hour after hour of the day in such a feeble occupation is certainly not a very edifying one, but it is a spectacle, unfortunately, which may be seen also in Rome or any other Italian city. It is only in comparatively recent years that the Italian aristocracy has begun to realise that if it is to continue to exist at all it must do something useful. In this respect the women of the *nobiltà* are far ahead of the men, and they are also far better educated. In every large city, and notably in Florence, Rome, and Naples, there are ladies of the highest rank who devote much of their time to useful works, and who are ever ready to help in alleviating poverty and distress. What they do, too, is, as a rule, done very quietly and with no ostentation, and some of the foremost in doing good and useful works are those whose names most rarely are to be seen on the lists of lady-patronesses of bazaars and charitable fêtes. One very great lady indeed occurs to my mind as I write—for I have sometimes seen her in Rome, poorly dressed and deeply veiled, in a tram-car at an early hour of the morning on her way to or from some errand of sympathy and charity. In the evening she would perhaps be entertaining in her own magnificent palace; but in the morning she was a worker, like the *operaio* seated next her, whose evening, perhaps, would be passed in a socialist club listening to a paid agitator denouncing the iniquities of the rich.

Although there are many and brilliant exceptions among them, it cannot be said that the men of the Italian *aristocrazia* are of much use to their country. A title is too often considered as making it derogatory to its possessor to enter any kind of business or devote himself to any occupation other than that of amusing himself. As everybody knows, titles in Italy are as plentiful as blackberries; but very many of them are by no means genuine, or, indeed, recognised by the Italian Government. Very frequently we may come across princes, dukes, and counts who have no real right to the title that they prefix to their names, and the Principe di This, or the Duca di That has perhaps only the legal right to the distinction of adding to his Christian and surname the explanatory words "dei principi," or "dei duchi di" This or That, thus identifying himself with the family bearing the title. The prevailing custom, however, and it is certainly a very ridiculous one, of numerous persons belonging to one family all annexing the family title does not contribute towards the dignity of the *nobiltà.* Too large a number of these individuals are in existence who use their titles as a commercial asset, and who in many cases are little better than mere adventurers. Certain of the *haute noblesse* have the right to hand over one of their secondary titles to any son upon whom they may choose to confer it—but this, of course, is quite a different matter. It is usually the smaller fry whose younger sons, brothers, and even cousins are eager to prefix the family title to their names, instead of being content with the legitimate and correct method which in Italy has always been to use the term *nobil' uomo*, a term which sufficiently identifies them with their family. Except among Italians more or less acquainted with our own system in these matters, it is almost impossible for them to understand that Englishmen may be members of the most illustrious of English families and yet have no handle to their name. That the grandson of an English duke, for instance, should be simply Mr. So-and-so is a mystery which they are entirely unable to solve. However, in Italy, as in most countries, the shepherds and shepherdesses of the *alta società* know their own sheep; and they know, too, the wandering sheep from foreign folds in a manner which few of our English "leaders of society" take the trouble to acquire.

In all places in which the English and Americans congregate, counts and marquises abound. *La caccia ai dollari* is a famous sport among these penniless noblemen, and it is very often successful. In Florence, especially, the chase is pursued with remarkable activity, and I am told that many of the pensions frequented by English and American women are coverts which are regularly drawn. The British and American consuls in these cities could, I fear, tell sad tales, if they chose to be so indiscreet, as to the snares spread by these hunters. But no doubt there are faults on both sides! The Italian does not, as a rule, understand the liberty accorded by custom to Anglo-Saxon women, and is apt to take advantage of the freedom of intercourse with the opposite sex which distinguishes them. The English or American woman, on the other hand, does not understand that the Italian does not understand—and so complications arise. Moreover, I am afraid that the Anglo-Saxon woman sometimes thinks to herself: "Oh, it doesn't matter how I behave, he is only a foreigner!" At any rate, if she does not think so, she often conducts herself as though this idea were in her mind.

But, indeed, why should I, while I am upon this subject, discuss the Italian mote, and not heed the

English beam? Italy abounds with British adventurers and adventuresses, and these of the most barefaced kind. Sometimes they hunt in couples, in the form of a most plausible and persuasive husband and wife. Of course, there are the social adventurers—but they, as a rule, have money, and their object is the comparatively harmless one of climbing. We need not concern ourselves with these, since we have hundreds of the same type in our own country. Nevertheless, it has sometimes filled me with amazement when I have seen British "bounders" of the most pronounced type—male and female—climb into the innermost recesses of Roman society, batter down portals as exclusive as—well, I will name no names—as any of those few remaining ones in London which know what the word exclusion means! The other type of British adventurer in Italy exists to prey upon his or her compatriots, and upon any Italians with whom they may scrape acquaintance. Many and varied are their manœuvres, and I have suffered from them myself. They have even found me out in my Tuscan hermitage, which is ten miles from a railway station and never an English-speaking individual within very much more than that distance. They have arrived by the creaky and jingling "machine" which conveys the Royal Mails to this *hinterland*, and which, I may add, passes my residence late in the evening—at an hour when visitors are scarcely expected.

On one occasion, at this untoward hour, a card was brought to me bearing not one, but two of the most illustrious surnames known to English history.

I confess that the coupling of these distinguished patronymics aroused immediate suspicion ; but what was I to do? To turn a stranger from my gates at nightfall, who declared that he had travelled miles to see me on the most urgent business, would have been almost brutal—so he was admitted. Naturally, the urgent business, which, by the way, he at first pretended was concerned with an English journal published in Italy, which I never happen to have perused, was the very ordinary one of inducing me to transfer money from my pockets to his own. There was a certain pathetic humour in the situation which stood him in far better stead than either his visiting-card or his story, for he naively admitted that when he alighted at the railway station he thought that, of course, my house was at the most a few minutes' walk. His wide experience of English residents in Italy had evidently never furnished him with a specimen so eccentric as to live among exclusively Italian surroundings—and there he was, at nine o'clock on a summer evening, ten miles from any place in which he could hope to get a whisky and soda. I heard afterwards that he had taken kindly enough to the substitute offered him by a neighbouring publican, so the modest donation which I made him, in order to get rid of him, was at all events partially expended in assisting local enterprise. But perhaps the most amusing English couple of this type of whom I have heard are a husband and wife whose beats lie in more fashionable quarters than mine. The plan of action appears to be invariably the same. While the husband is explaining the urgent business which has obliged him to take the liberty of calling, etc. etc., the lady is suddenly seized with faintness. She has a weak heart, and to move her at such a moment, or, indeed, for some hours after the attack, would be highly dangerous. I am thankful to say that I have never been honoured by a visit from this fashionable couple; but I am assured that they have spent many pleasant and profitable days as the unexpected guests of kind-hearted people who naturally would not hear of their departing until the lady was quite out of danger. Our paternal Government attempts to outwit adventurers of this type by issuing warnings in the shape of a letter from the Foreign Office to the various British consuls whose districts they frequent; but it is, of course, merely a chance if the victim happens to mention their names to the Consul and so is able to receive his warning in time.

Other experiences of the kind I have had in Rome. There the British adventurer sometimes presents him or herself in the guise of the pious Catholic yearning to be admitted to the presence of the Holy Father. Of course my obvious question as to why they should resort to me and not to some English dignitary of the Church in communication with the Vatican leads to endless explanations all amazingly futile; and, on my assuring them that I am the very last person in Rome whose recommendation would be favourably received in Vatican circles, the real business is brought on the *tapis.* The worst of it all is that these impostors are very often what they themselves would probably describe as quite superior people. They sometimes produce letters from well-known individuals, written on terms of equality and even of friendliness, and more than once I have seen a familiar handwriting and signature to a letter they have insisted on my reading. I have often wondered if the writers of such letters have the slightest idea of the uses to which they are put.

Like Rome, Florence is too largely dependent on foreign visitors to be progressive in matters of commerce and industry. She contents herself with the possession of her marvellous treasures of Art, and her intellectual traditions of the past, knowing that these alone cause a yearly stream of foreign gold to flow into her coffers from visitors and sightseers. The city is increasing both in size and population, but, as in Rome, there is little attempt to make it in any way self-supplying. The prices of the most ordinary objects of everyday necessity are very high, and a demand for any but the most commonplace articles for household use is generally met by the reply: "We must write to Milan for it—or to Germany." And yet there are numbers of excellent workmen among the Florentines capable of copying in the most accurate and artistic manner any design or object entrusted to them.

One of the traditional handicrafts of Florence, that of working in the precious metals, is still almost an instinct with many of her inhabitants belonging to the working-classes. Unluckily these artists, for in some cases they are worthy of the name, find less and less scope for their talents, and the Florentine *orefici* have indeed fallen on evil times. German productions turned out by machinery flood the goldsmiths' shops, to the exclusion of native talent, and the goldsmith himself finds it cheaper to import these articles than to maintain a staff of *orefici*, for whose far more genuine and artistic work there is little or no sale. Another famous Florentine trade, that of working in the *pietra dura*, has almost ceased to exist. Cabinets, paper-weights, tables, and various other objects of the kind which the sellers will swear by all their gods to be in *pietra dura* are nothing of the sort, but clever imitations in soft stones which require little or no skill to work, and which, in a comparatively short space of time, crack, or become loose in their settings. Many of these imitations, too, are of German origin, and it is now extremely difficult to find any genuine Florentine *pietra dura* work in the bric-â-brac shops. Formerly, however, so renowned was the skill of the Florentine artists in *pietra dura*, that under the Medici rulers, and down to the middle of the nineteenth century, the Tuscan Government exercised a jealous watch over them, and the most able were retained to work solely for the State. Even at the present day there exists a Government institution in which beautiful specimens of the real *pietra dura* work are made, and the artists engaged there are not permitted to work for other employers.

In connection with this industry I had an interesting experience some years ago. It is not, I imagine, generally known that the decorations of the famous throne at Delhi of the ancient Mogul emperors were made by Florentine workers in *pietra dura*, specially sent out by the Medici of the day at the instance of the Eastern potentate then ruling over a portion of our Indian Empire. When preparations were being made for the great Durbar held in connection with the visit of his present Majesty when Prince of Wales to India, it was brought to the notice of the then Viceroy, Lord Curzon, that many of the *pietra dura* panels adorning the throne, which are of extremely beautiful design and workmanship, had been missing since the days of the Mutiny. Lord Curzon was anxious that these panels should, if possible, be substituted by others of equal worth before the Durbar took place, and he wrote to our ambassador in Rome asking him if any Florentine expert could be found who would undertake the work of restoration according to the old traditions of the *pietra dura* art. As I happened to be in Florence at the time, the ambassador asked me if I would try to find a suitable man. The Indian Government offered very handsome terms, and the work was calculated to last for two years, during which period the Florentine artist, if found, was to have at his command a staff of native workmen accustomed to handling precious stones. I at once carried the matter to the Director of the Government *pietra dura* works in Florence, though, knowing the regulations by which no artist engaged there could accept other employment of the kind, I had small hopes of being able to secure one of those experts. The historical interest of the fact that four centuries ago Florentines had been sent out to Delhi to decorate the throne of the Mogul emperors, and that once again the services of Florentines were sought for the same purpose, caused the Director to seek instructions from headquarters, with the result that the Italian Government at once gave all facilities for the dispatch to India of one of the most skilled artists in the Florence factory. A search among the Archives of Florence confirmed the fact of a band of workers in *pietra dura* having been placed at the disposal of the Mogul Emperor of the day by, I think, Cosimo de' Medici. Unluckily, the newspapers got hold of the object of my mission, and I was, of course, besieged by all the dealers in sham *pietra dura* in the city, each anxious to send out his particular "artist."

Naturally, I had no intention of recommending any but a most undoubted expert in the real art, but it amused me to see to what lengths of dishonesty the dealers would go, and I pretended to be taken in by their assurances, concealing from them that I happened to be aware of the difference between real and spurious *pietra dura* work. I suppose that the artist in the Royal factory had been indiscreet enough to talk about the affair while it was yet under discussion, for the terms offered by the Indian Government were known in every shop in Florence dealing in mosaics. One establishment in particular was so persistent in forcing its claims to possessing the only artist in Florence suitable for the post, and so eager to convince me that the services of the said artist could be secured at less than what one of the employees of the Royal factory would demand, that I had the curiosity to examine more closely into the swindle which I felt convinced was underlying so much concern for the suitable restoration of the Mogul throne. Having obtained, not without some difficulty, the name and address of the "artist" so highly recommended, I sought out a friend of mine who was also earning his living by his hands, but in another trade. In a few hours my friend brought the "artist" in question to see me, and I proceeded to sound him as to how much he had been offered by his *principale* if he would accept a job in India. I will not state the exact sum, but his *principale* had informed him that if he cared to undertake a two years' engagement in India he would allow him to go, and would, moreover, pay him higher wages during that period than those which he was already receiving—in fact, not a tenth part of the salary offered by the Indian Government. In course of conversation he informed me that he knew scarcely anything about the real *pietra dura* process, as he was exclusively employed in the manufacture of the sham article. He was under the impression that this last was what he would be required to work upon in India, and, unlike his *principale*, had evidently not the slightest idea of the terms the Indian Government had offered. In a word, it was all a clever "try on" on the part of the Florentine shopkeeper to foist upon the English ambassador an ordinary worker in sham *pietra dura* at the salary offered, to pay the said workman a pittance during his engagement, and to put the enormous difference in his own pocket.

I am glad to say that, notwithstanding several similar intrigues, which I reported both to the ambassador and to Lord Curzon, the skilled expert in *pietra dura* from the Royal factory was ultimately dispatched to Delhi to execute restorations to the Mogul throne which his predecessors in the art had enriched with their decorations four hundred years previously. Now, the dealer in mosaic work especially, and in *objets d'art* generally, who attempted this little "try on," which, had it succeeded, would have put several thousands of francs into his own pocket during the period of two years, and would have supplied the Indian Government with a work that would have quickly perished in a tropical climate, was not a Florentine, but of Teuton origin.

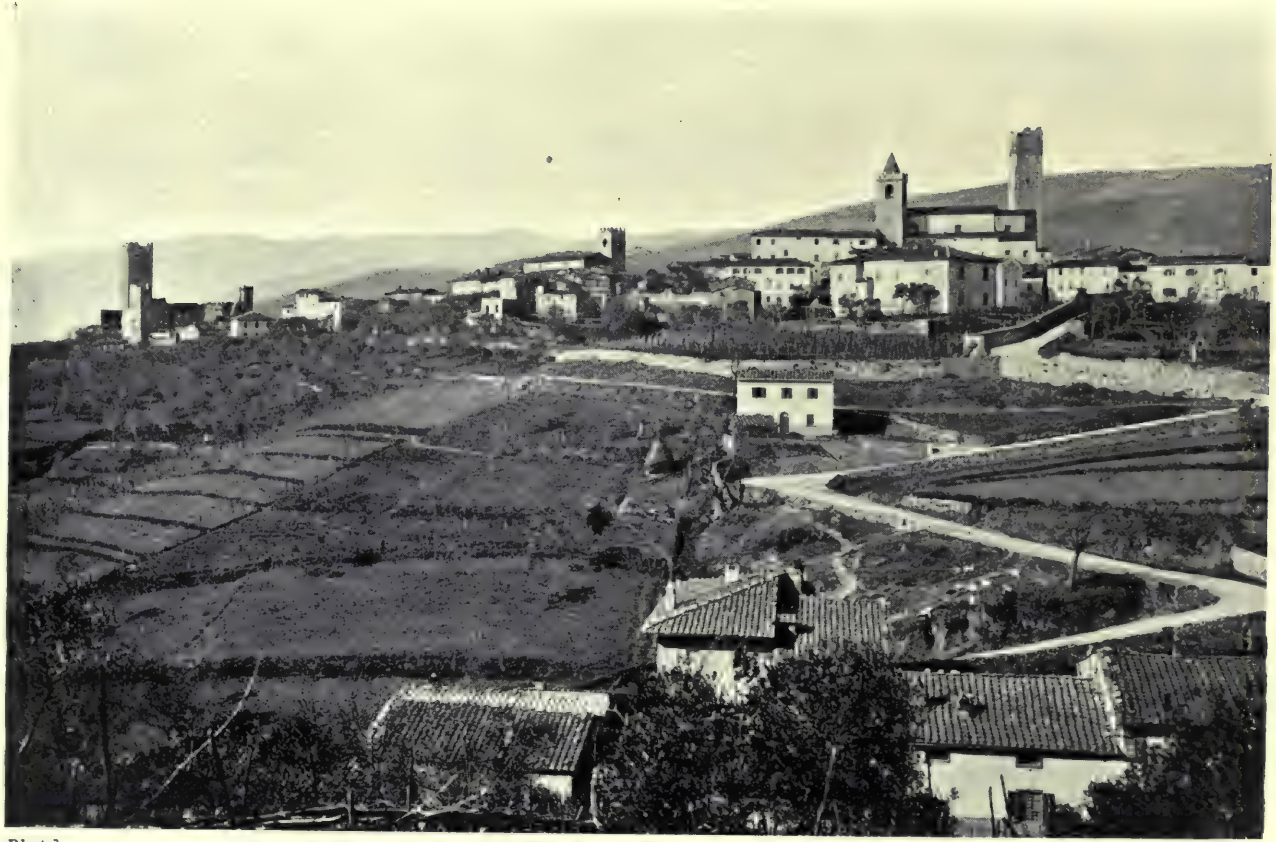
This is only an example of the countless instances in which Germans are, in every part of Italy, ousting the Italians. The German invasion of Italy in the course of the last twenty years has assumed almost incredible proportions. It is not the German tourists who are injuring Italy. They bring money into the country. The commercial German, however,—and he is everywhere and, one may almost say, in everything,—takes money out of the country. And not only does he do this, but he takes the very bread out of the mouths of the Italians of the working-classes. He has succeeded in dumping down his own cheaper, machine-made imitations of Italian handicraft throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the consequence is that in such cities as Florence, Rome, and Naples numbers of skilled artisans are unable to obtain employment, because it no longer pays the shopkeepers and dealers to stock the results of their handiwork. Nor is this German invasion confined to so-called artistic productions only. In the little country town nearest to me here in Tuscany every one of the principal shops is owned by a German, or German-Swiss; while the two rather important manufactories it contains are both in the hands of the said Teuton shopkeepers.

I might, to be sure, here point a moral, and observe that whereas a few years ago English goods and materials were in vogue in Italy, these are now almost entirely supplanted by things made in Germany. And the humiliating part of the business is, that I am bound to confess that these last are as a general rule infinitely superior. I have watched this development closely for some years, and year by year I notice a constant deterioration in every kind of English goods imported into Italy, and a corresponding amelioration in the quality and variety of the German productions. Unluckily, the Italians have for some little time begun to notice the same thing. I say, unluckily, merely because if it were a question of German *versus* English commercial enterprise only, I should naturally prefer to see English goods maintaining the superiority for which they were formerly renowned. I must admit, however, that personally speaking I should like to see the day when the Italians will have need neither of the German nor the English "fornitori" in their midst; and I am convinced that this day would come far more quickly if they would be less ready to encourage foreign intruders at the expense of their own countrymen. But until that day comes, it may be permitted to one who is himself an obtruder in the country to deplore the fact that any article guaranteed as *inglese* can no longer be regarded as a superior article, but rather the reverse —whereas the *roba tedesca*, while considerably cheaper, is also as a rule considerably more satisfactory.

It all depends, of course, on one's individual tastes whether one likes the social life of Florence or not. The interests to be found by any student or lover of the arts—always excepting that of Music, which, in Florence, may almost be said to be a negligible quantity—are too well known to be described in these pages. The Leonardo da Vinci Society, to which belong most of the intellectual members of the Florentine world, gives many evening entertainments in the course of the year. At these one is sure to meet people who have other topics of conversation than those concerned with their neighbours' doings; and here, too, may often be heard famous musicians and celebrated artists, both national and foreign, who seem ever ready to give of their best when guests of the Society.

I forget who the French cynic was who declared that the only fault he had to find with towns was the fact that they were surrounded by the country. Unlike him, I plead guilty to being ever ready to shake the dust of a city from off my feet and to exchange it for that of the country—and to me, personally, the surroundings of Florence are far more attractive than the town itself. I do not mean the immediate surroundings. Places such as Fiesole, for instance, I rigidly avoid. Except in the province of Pisa, it would be hard to find in all Tuscany a more objectionable population than the Fiesolani. In addition to a natural uncouthness, which on slight provocation degenerates into brutality, the people have been contaminated by perpetual influxes of the worst specimens of German, British, and American tourists, and the visitor to Fiesole is apt to pay dearly for the privilege of gazing at the views over the Val d'Arno, which can be with difficulty enjoyed without molestations from every species of tout and undesirable character of every kind.

Very different are the people of the Pistoiese, the lovely district to the north of Florence backed by the Apennines. I recently spent a whole winter and spring in a house dignified by the name of a villa, which I hired—furnished—at the rate of something under three pounds a month. The furniture, certainly, was primitive, and so was the life—but all the same the last was thoroughly enjoyable—in its own peculiar way, and this entirely, thanks to the simple kindliness and almost embarrassing honesty of the peasant population of the mountain valley in which the villa was situated. These good folk seemed as though they could never do enough for me and for my Tuscan friend who was my companion. Our *ménage* consisted of natives of the valley, and the owner of the villa and her daughter lived in a remote corner of it. Unlike the British landlady, she kept a maternal and searching eye always open to see that we were not paying more than the local prices for our provisions. How she and her daughter occupied their days, I never knew; and had it not been for certain articles restricted to female wear which on washing days hung out of upper windows to dry, we should scarcely have known that the house contained other inmates than ourselves. Occasionally, on fine days,



Photo] [Alinari.

SERRAVALLE PISTOIESE.

the old lady would descend into the garden, accompanied by her daughter. If she found either myself or my friend there, she would relate how a Roman prince had wished to marry *la mia bambina,* as she called her, though the term was scarcely applicable under the circumstances. I am afraid that Roman prince was a myth; for not only was the *bambina* very much the reverse of prepossessing, but I should imagine that no *dot* could have been forthcoming, neither could I understand what should bring a Roman prince to the Val ——. Both mother and daughter were very devout, and indeed I think they seldom went beyond the walls of the villa except to attend Mass and other functions at the village church near by. Nevertheless, to mention priests to either of them was to embark upon a subject before which the Roman prince faded into insignificance. *Briganti* and *mascalzoni* were quite the least opprobrious epithets which they would apply to the clergy in general and to their own parish priest in particular—and with regard to the last I fear that they were not misplaced. The *parocco,* I regret to say, was the one discordant element in our otherwise peaceful life at Val ——. He was a truculent peasant from another part of Tuscany, and had not long been appointed to the cure. For some time after our arrival in the place my friend and I were unable to understand why the priest should be the only person in the whole valley who regarded us with ill-concealed aversion. After one or two attempts to conciliate him, we decided to leave him alone, and we were given to understand by many of his flock that this was the best thing we could do, and that they wished they could do the same! It was not long before we discovered the reason of his black looks. It appeared that our landlady was in the habit of letting her villa every summer to a wealthy and very *dévote* Florentine lady and her husband—an elderly couple, both of whom were invalids—and that the priest got a great deal of money out of them. He was in deadly fear lest it might be our intention to buy the villa, as he knew that one of our reasons for coming to Val —— was to see if a suitable property was to be had in the neighbourhood. I am afraid that my companion, being already full of dislike and distrust of the clergy, and being, moreover, no mean adept in that Tuscan art of leg-pulling which I have already described, took great delight in adding to the *parocco's* misgivings. We had not the slightest intention of buying the villa we had rented for a few months—but all the same my friend deliberately encouraged the villagers to believe that the purchase was more or less a settled thing. The clerical scowl grew blacker and blacker—and I verily believe that only the certainty that suspicion would immediately fall upon him prevented the irate *parocco* from lying in wait for us behind some hedge with a gun. At length he became desperate, and on the vigil of some *festa*, when our *padrona di casa* was fulfilling her religious duties, he threatened her with the nethermost pains of hell in the future and disaster in the present if she ventured to sell her villa to us. We had to confess to the lady that the whole affair had only been devised to *prendere in giro* the *parocco*, and, whatever her designs upon us as possible purchasers might have been, she not only thoroughly enjoyed the joke, but, I believe, became my friend's confederate in the matter. As to this particular *parocco*, as he was unluckily no very exceptional type of Italian rural priests, I feel that some description of his practices will not be attributed to any personal resentment of an attitude which only afforded us amusement at the time. Like many other similar villages in Italy, Val —— is a place of pilgrimage, inasmuch as it possesses one of the innumerable Madonnas who are supposed to work miracles. The possession of one of these supernatural objects is, of course, a most valuable asset to any village community, and though there is extremely little faith left on the part of the population in the genuineness of the business, there is a very lively sense of the pecuniary benefits brought to the place by the pilgrimages. It is not too much to say that the Madonna in these instances is usually "run" by a syndicate consisting of the clergy and the local tradespeople with the publican at their head. In the village, for example, in which I live, the preachers on special occasions are chosen not so much on account of their oratorical gifts—and certainly not on account of their moral worth, for I have heard observations passed during a sermon as to the number of its deliverers' illegitimate children—as whether they meet with the approval of the neighbouring osteria-keeper as likely to "draw" a thirsty crowd. This worthy, and not the priest, is in reality the most influential organiser of religious celebrations in my parish!

In Val ——, and in many other similar places, the unfortunate peasants are not only made to pay two francs apiece for the candles they hold when following a procession in honour of the Madonna, but they have to return the candles to the priests after the function, and the priests sell the remnants. I am told (on the authority of a sacristan!) that a windy day is particularly welcomed by the clerics, since the candles get quickly blown out. The peasants sometimes pay as much as ten francs for the honour of a prominent place in a procession, and if they cannot pay in money they will pay in kind, sending chickens, grain, or wine to the *parocco.* The amazing part of the whole thing is that very likely the very peasant who allows himself to be victimised by these clerical extortioners does not scruple to express the most profound scepticism of, and even contempt for, miraculous Madonnas and all the rest of the priestly myths. I have talked with many such, and knowing the failing of the Tuscan peasant—a pleasant enough failing when one has not to do business with him—of expressing opinions he thinks may please his listener, I have sometimes pretended to be myself a thorough believer. Occasionally I have met with a faith which was evidently genuine—and when this is the case, who would take upon himself the responsibility of disturbing it? I, for one, certainly would not. Even misplaced faith may be better than none at all. But for the most part I have only met with the most cynical scepticism, and this not only among the peasants and artisans, but sometimes also among priests themselves.

For a long time, indeed for many years, I found it very hard to account for this characteristically Italian attitude towards religious matters; and it certainly is not an easy matter to explain why a peasant, for instance, should trouble himself to make a considerable sacrifice in money or in kind unless he were convinced that he would obtain some spiritual benefit therefrom. It was not until I had become better acquainted with the material side of the problem that things began, so to speak, to straighten themselves out. It was, I admit, something of a shock to find that a material side existed, and a still greater one to realise the fact that it not only existed but that it greatly overshadowed the spiritual element in Italian popular religion. Yet I think that no one who has studied Italian popular life, and has honestly attempted to put away his own personal beliefs or disbeliefs while studying it, can fail to come to the conclusion that the boasted unity of faith in the dogmas and doctrines of the Church is, in Italy—the headquarters of Catholicism—non-existent.

But the question still remains as to why, if this be so, the peasant, to whom every lira is of immense consequence, should so frequently give money or money value to support religious observances in which he has not the slightest faith. We will put aside the spiritual advantages, real or imaginary, which may accrue to him from such support, and glance only at the material and tangible benefits it brings him. To begin with, he is part of a community which for countless generations has centred round the parish church. Let us enlarge the picture, and magnify our Italian town or village into Italy herself. In no country, except perhaps in Germany —and certainly in no Catholic country—is religious scepticism so profound and so common in all classes as in Italy. Yet in Italy as a whole the Church is still the most powerful factor in the country. That it is losing its power daily is of no present moment, since enough remains, and will long remain, greatly to influence the Italian character and, perhaps, Italian policy. To the average well-educated Italian the Church represents not so much a spiritual fabric in which he will find future salvation, as a great national institution of which in his innermost heart he is very proud, as being typical of the influence of the Latin race upon the thought and intellect of the world. He may rail at the priests, laugh at the ceremonies, deny the dogmas; but when it comes to the point he will not willingly consent to any measure which would lower the prestige of the Latin Church in the eyes of foreign nations. You may discuss the abuses of the Church with the most "intransigente" of Italian socialists or freemasons, and up to a certain point you will feel convinced that he would readily see the Vatican in ruins and a cinematograph established in St. Peter's; but there will infallibly come the moment when, should you agree with him (which I should not), he will turn and rend you. Although he may not himself be aware of it, there lurks at the back of his mind pride in the Papacy as an institution of purely Italian origin and development exercising a power more world-wide than that which the Roman Empire ever wielded. He may detest the methods of this power, and believe, not without reason, that it is injurious to the progress of any nation that allows it to become a dominating influence; but he recognises that any attack on the institution which was in reality to cause its overthrow, would be a deadly blow aimed at his nation and at the whole of the Latin race. It may be objected that these are sentimental reasonings only; but it must not be forgotten that sentiment is the ruling influence in every race. The anti-clerical educated Italian, however, is not sentimental only in his attitude towards the Papacy as distinct from the Church; he is also influenced, although in a less crude form, by the same considerations which weigh with the peasant. The death of the Papacy as an Italian institution would mean an immense material loss to Italy—a loss not merely financial, but also political. In a word, his country would find itself deprived of an indispensable moral support both at home and abroad. Paradoxical as such an attitude may appear—and, of course, anathema to the Catholic whose reason has been submitted to his faith—an educated Italian, or for that matter an educated individual of any race who has become more or less Italianised by long residence in the country, may come to combine profound dislike of the Church with a certain admiration for and pride in the Papacy as a great though, of course, essentially human Latin organisation.

The uneducated Italian, on the other hand, has naturally only the vaguest idea, if any at all, of the Papacy as distinct from the Church. Nevertheless, it is the Papacy which he unconsciously supports when, as is often the case, he cheerfully submits to be exploited by the priests for objects in which he has little or no real belief. He is acting for himself and his small community in precisely the same way as the educated Italian freethinker is acting in the interests of Italy and the Latin race. The difference between their respective attitudes is one of degree only. The peasant is perfectly aware of the immediate and tangible advantages which accrue to him by supporting his local sanctuary, and lending his material if not spiritual support to those things which he practically regards as *storie.* In the first place, it is well to keep on good terms with the *parocco.* A kind of mutual understanding may be said to exist between the ecclesiastical shepherd and his flock, especially when, as is frequently the case, the *parocco* is a peasant like his parishioners. As likely as not, the peasant will give vent to language of a wholly irreligious kind when he is called upon to contribute some of his earnings to the glory of the local Madonna, and he cherishes no illusions as to where his money eventually finds its way; but he would be roused to fury were the local Madonna to be publicly held up to ignominy as a painted fraud. Such an exposure would be bad for trade. The power which attracted the country people from far and near to the little *paese* would depart from it; its reputation (and here the spirit of "campanalismo," to which I have already alluded, comes in) would suffer, and many an opportunity of doing business during the pilgrimage season be lost.

As to the policy of keeping in with the *parocco,* to any one who knows the undercurrents of Italian country life, the advantages to be gained from it are obvious. A very few years ago, when the Italian

Government was under the mistaken idea that it could suppress socialistic and anarchist ideas by persecution, it was not only advisable but necessary to be well looked upon by the priests. In those days any young fellow who was rash enough to air his anti-clerical ideas ran the risk of being denounced to the civil authorities as a *sovversivo* or an anarchist, and of finding himself arrested and sent to the *domicilio coatto.* I myself know of several village lads entirely guiltless of any revolutionary ideas, whose only crime consisted in the fact that they declined to attend religious functions, who in a little Tuscan town with which I am acquainted were denounced by the priests as dangerous anarchists, and consigned to the *domicilio coatto,* from which they very naturally emerged ruined in character and justly embittered against a society in which such foolish cruelty was possible. Fortunately, a wiser policy now prevails in Italy, and priestly denunciation would no longer be allowed to influence the civil authorities in such cases. But the facts which I have stated occurred comparatively recently, and may fairly be quoted as evidencing the ruthless spirit in which the priests would hound to destruction any who ventured to interfere with their trade, had they the power to do so.

As things stand at present, this power is fortunately denied to them in Italy as elsewhere. They can still, however, do much to make or mar the career of those who actively oppose their practices, especially in villages and small country towns. Moreover, the peasant priest is as likely as not to combine the occupation of *sensale* with his other trades, and many a small peasant proprietor or storekeeper depends upon his good word for a profitable sale or purchase. Among the many little matters of business which the priestly *sensale* is usually ready to arrange are marriages. It is not long ago that a priest whom I asked to breakfast one day informed me of his successes in this line. With the slightest encouragement, I believe he would have offered his services to me; and, indeed, he alluded more than once to various families in the district able to give their daughters satisfactory dowries. No doubt, however, he perceived that the ground was not favourable; for he shifted it, and began again later on, offering to negotiate on my behalf for the purchase of a piece of land adjoining my property, which he pointed out would be to my advantage to possess.

But I must not be unfair on the rural Italian clergy, neither would I wish to create the impression that there are no individuals worthy of their office to be found among them. Moreover, even the worst among them are the servants, rather than the masters, of their parishioners. They are usually men whose mental outlook differs in no way from that of those to whose spiritual wants they are supposed to minister. Of peasant origin themselves, they find themselves placed among peasants who would resent any attitude of social superiority on their part. Hence they are often compelled to drift with the current of popular opinion; to feign to ignore, or perhaps participate in practices altogether at variance with the doctrines they are called upon to preach in their churches. In addition to these disadvantages, they are often extremely poor.

In countless cases, as I have mentioned before, the son of a peasant becomes a priest not from any special vocation for Holy Orders, but in order to make a living for himself and his relatives. His stipend is probably something under forty pounds a year, paid, as a rule, by the Government, and he usually has a small *podere*—a kind of miniature glebe—from which he naturally does all in his power to extract some addition to his income. As to his miracle-working picture or statue, if his church is fortunate enough to possess one, he very often does not believe in its powers himself, and if you possess his confidence he will probably hint as much to you. But it is a valuable asset—an attraction belonging to the *paese* which it is to his own and to the common interest to "boom" to the best of his ability.

In a certain church in Campania there are some stones which occasionally undergo the not uncommon and purely natural process of sweating. This is regarded, of course, as a supernatural phenomenon by the people.

A priest was appointed to the Church whose honesty was superior to his judgment. He ventured to attempt to persuade the people that the weeping of the stones was due not to the sorrows of the Madonna, but to certain atmospherical conditions, and created a riot by doing so, in which he very nearly lost his life. In this case, however, he had offended the genuine faith of his flock; for in southern Italy faith still exists, and is none the less genuine because it manifests itself in very debased forms. Were a priest to be equally honest in a country town or village of northern or central Italy, he would run little risk of offending the faith of his people, but his honesty would be speedily checked by an intimation that he was damaging their pecuniary interests and the local reputation of their *paese*; and that he must either do what was expected of him, or the place would be made too hot to hold him. As to the pecuniary sacrifices so often made by members of the lower classes, and especially among the peasants, who are in reality utter sceptics as to the genuineness of the pious myths recounted to them, I believe that something more than mere business principles enters. There is a lurking fear lest after death things might turn out to be as the priests had represented them—and a feeling that in order to guard against any unpleasant surprises of this description it would be more politic to have something to the credit side in Domeneddio's ledgers. After all, if we come to analyse the matter, the same feeling probably exists in most of us; and hence the power of the priesthood in every age and of every creed, Christian and otherwise.

CHAPTER V

IN TUSCANY—*continued*

IT is remarkable how quickly and easily the months seem to slip away in Italy. The seasons merge into each other so imperceptibly that one is scarcely conscious of their passage. In my remote Tuscan home, which stands above a little village nestling on the slopes of what are known as the Colli Pisani, I seem to be perpetually entering upon a new month. It is quite possible, of course, that this impression is derived from the fact that a general settlement of wages, household bills, and other domestic matters of an equally prosaic and disturbing nature has to be dealt with at these periods; but be this how it may, the intervening weeks of comparative peace, and of the absence of that wholly unreasonable feeling of mental irritation which the sight of tradesmen's books produces on mankind in general, pass all too rapidly.

Perhaps I may be allowed to pause in the excursion I am taking my readers through Italy, and to give some account of that particular portion of Tuscany in which I pass the greater portion of my Italian year, and which is known as the Province of Pisa. I may say at once that it is at the same time one of the most attractive and one of the least desirable parts of Tuscany in which to live. Scenery, climate — these are delightful. It is seldom too cold, at least for a north-country Englishman, and rarely too hot. In winter it is usually sufficient to open the windows on the sunny side of the house in order to enjoy a soft, balmy air stealing into the room, which renders the wood fire burning in the grate almost a superfluity.

In summer it is sufficient to shut the windows and the outer *persiennes* during the heat of the day in order to keep the rooms deliciously cool. Ah, that simple process of shutting the windows in order to keep out the heat—how difficult it is to make the mind of the British domestic realise the logic of it! How often, on a hot summer's day in London, for instance, have I not watched with a pity akin to derision windows being flung open to "let in more air"—hot air, rising from the sun-baked pavements and streets! My gentle reminder that a window which will keep out the cold will equally keep out the heat passes unnoticed—for, indeed, it is not only British domestics in whom the sense of logic fails in this matter. However, in my Tuscan establishment I have—may I say, fortunately?—no English servants. If I had, I am quite convinced that domestic upheavals and extravagant waste would be the order of the day. Moreover, my Italian servants would speedily become discontented, and might even be corrupted so far as to consider whether or not it was "their place" to do this, that, or the other piece of work—though, so far as I am concerned, observation, made in this sense, would be followed by their instant dismissal.

I confess that when I first come back to England after many months spent in Italy I suffered horribly from the British domestic. I find myself perpetually committing breaches of etiquette. If by mischance I momentarily forget where I am and wish the footman who calls me in the morning "good-morning," he withers me with a glance of contempt, and I feel that at the least I have taken an unwarrantable liberty with him. I can quite understand his embarrassment when drowsiness and force of habit combined lead me to say *buon giorno* to him—but when I have done that, I have immediately buried my face under the bedclothes. I never am quite clear in my mind as to whether the inhumanness of English domestics is their fault or that of their employers. I am afraid, however, that it must be theirs, for they are apt to be equally unhuman to their equals if called upon to do anything out of "their place." However this may be, it is certain that if one treated English servants in the same friendly and human manner one naturally displays towards Italian domestics, instead of respect one would very soon meet with a contemptuous familiarity. The consciousness of this immense and altogether artificial gulf which separates us from our domestics in English life is to me extremely irksome. No doubt the bright smile with which the average Italian servant responds to any ordinary observation made to him, his openly expressed interest in any business which may concern his *padroni,* his readiness to turn his hand to anything, however foreign that thing may be to his particular place in the household, may be amenities born of habit and custom rather than of any special sympathy with or affection for his employers. But even so, they are amenities which are pleasingly human; and one does not feel oneself to be merely surrounded by dangerous talking-machines as one does in the presence of the beings who in England are regarded as excellent servants. Life, too, seems to run more smoothly where, as in Italy, there is at least an outward appearance of a common sympathy between the servers and the served; and very often this sympathy is not merely of a conventional kind, but genuine on both sides.

But alas, even in Italy the class of domestic servants who are disinterestedly attached to their *padroni* is fast disappearing, with the consequent result that the *padroni* themselves are no longer able to have the same confidence in, or the same feeling for, their domestics which formerly was possible and even usual. It is usually declared that the spread of socialistic ideas is responsible for this change; but I wonder whether it may not also be due to the spread of education in the country. Nowadays, as I have pointed out elsewhere, numbers of the young fellows who in a former generation would have been content to follow in their father's footsteps, are satisfied with nothing less than an appointment as *impiegato* in some Government department, or enter the crowded ranks of students ambitious to make a career for themselves in law, medicine, and other civil professions. The girls gravitate to the cities, where, if they have a certain education, they may reasonably hope to find employment as typists, or posts in the various large shops, or with the telephone companies. Domestic service is fast becoming a trade which is by no means being adopted by the most respectable or trustworthy members of the lower classes. I feel that some socialistically inclined reader will take advantage of my supposition that the spread of education among the masses may be responsible for this change, and that he will point to it as a proof that education is all that is required to remove the inequality of classes. If he do so, I will reply that it is better to be a loyal servant to a private individual than to be an ill-paid and corrupt employé of a bureaucracy. A State is admittedly the hardest of all masters to serve; and when the State itself has become the servant of a bureaucracy its exactions do not become less severe.

From any one of the windows of my house I can look over an expanse of country difficult to rival for variety. On one side is a view of purple hills, where heather grows, which reminds me of many a north-country scene in my native land; on another, the fertile Pisan plain melts into the sea, and on clear nights the powerful light at the entrance to the Gulf of Spezia, some eighty miles away, flashes at intervals out of the darkness. The Duomo and leaning Campanile of Pisa, a dozen miles away as the crow flies, gleam white in the sunshine, while behind them rise bold, jagged peaks of the Apuan Alps, better known as the Carrara Mountains. On another side again rises Monte Nero, behind which lies Leghorn, while away to the northward stretch the blue distances of the Val d'Arno Inferiore, dotted with the towns of Pontedera, Santa Croce, Montopoli, and a score of others, and backed by the snowy crests of the Apennines. In the fields and valleys immediately below me are vineyards and olive groves, about which the great white oxen are perpetually moving with their slow, measured tread, while all through the warm spring nights the fireflies dance among the patches of corn, and the nightingales sing from every bank and thicket. It is a pastoral country, full of a quiet and poetic beauty all its own. An occasional faint and far-off whistle from the railway ten miles away in the plain is the only sound which speaks of progress and conjures up visions of cities—and sometimes in spring and summer months the hoot of a motor-car. In the fields and vineyards the peasants sing stornelli all day long—and I often wish they wouldn't! I do most of my writing out of doors, and there are moments when the stornelli and the singers would both succumb to an apoplexy if my language were translated into English and its purport carried into effect.

But I regret to say that often while I sit watching the lovely prospect of the ever-changing light over valleys and mountains the two last couplets in a verse of a certain hymn beloved by Protestant missionaries comes into my mind. I am not well up in hymns, but I believe the one in question to have been written by a certain Bishop Heber. I have a vague idea that the hymn has something to do with India or other parts of the heathen world, the inhabitants of which are not in complete harmony with the natural beauty of their surroundings. If this be so, its author need not have gone so far afield for his inspiration. He would have found ample material in the Province of Pisa. I wish I could represent the inhabitants of this province as being as attractive as those in other Tuscan districts; but, save for the Tuscan landscape, there is little in this region to remind one that one is in Tuscany. The people are in the general way both arrogant and uncouth, of a prodigious vanity, and yet at the same time very ignorant, and utterly opposed to any reformation of their habits and customs. The peasantry are not *au fond* bad-hearted. Indeed, where I live they are entirely untrustworthy, avaricious to an incredible extent, but, on the whole, a sober, hard-working class, in which crimes of violence are excessively rare.

When I first came into the district, my doubts were soon aroused as to the character of the people by hearing from neighbouring landowners the frequent observation—made for my benefit—"Buona gente — buonissima gente! ma bisogna saperle prendere." Now, this "knowing how to take them" in reality meant, as I soon realised, the process of sitting down quietly under all the dishonesty, and submitting to all the pretensions of a singularly unscrupulous race. The fact is, that in the Province of Pisa generally there is very little distinction either in character, habits, or ideas between the so-called *signoria* and the small shopkeepers and peasants; and I am bound to say that what distinction there is, is entirely to the advantage of the peasants. A common dead-level of entire lack of refinement, both in ideas and manners, unites all classes of the community. The landowner, often of good old family, who would represent with us the squire of the locality, is in nine cases out of ten an individual whom it would be quite impossible to ask to breakfast or dinner. Moreover, he would be extremely miserable and embarrassed were he to find himself a guest in an ordinary gentleman's house. He seeks his society entirely among those who are his social inferiors in birth only, but who are his equals in all other attributes. His leisure hours are passed in the *osterie* and the *appalti*, the little stores in which tobacco, groceries, and liquors of various kinds are sold. Here he plays cards, smokes, drinks, and gossips, often with his own peasants, and in the company of the doctor, the priest, and the population generally. The presence of the priest might be supposed to exercise a restraining influence on the conversation in these resorts. It does nothing of the kind, however, for the grossest blasphemy and language of other descriptions form the usual accompaniment to the conversation of a Pisano. Throughout Tuscany, indeed, the habit of swearing is carried to excess. No one, I imagine, objects to using, or hearing, a hearty swear-word every now and then—that is, no one who is not an intolerable prig. But there is a considerable difference between legitimate swearing and the use of blasphemies and unrepeatable phrases with which the most sacred names and objects are coupled. This last form is universal throughout the Province of Pisa. I have heard these phrases used, too, in the presence of priests, and pass not only unrebuked, but unheeded by them. In a village which I will not name here the sacristan is, I am inclined to think, the foulest-mouthed member of the community. After him come the local landed proprietor—and the priest who teaches in the village school! It is perhaps not to be wondered at if, in the said village—and it is not an exceptional one in these matters—one hears both girls and boys using phrases of the most revolting nature, in which the names of the Madonna and others to which I will not allude are introduced.

A League exists in Tuscany, and especially in Florence, against foul swearing, and it is supported by all classes. Unfortunately, it would seem to be non-existent where it is most needed. In these country districts of which I am writing there is no quarter from which any refining or civilising influence can reach the people. The Church, unluckily, makes appeal only to the superstitions and the pockets of those who frequent it. The priests, who might even still do much, instead of setting a good example too frequently set the very reverse. They are mixed up with all that is most worldly and corrupt in the rural life around them. No sooner have they doffed their sacred vestments than they become mere *affaristi*—touting for commissions to buy or sell, to make up a marriage—and, very often, to make or ruin some man or woman of the place. I am not exaggerating, for I am speaking of what I know, and of what I see going on around me.

It is not the custom, nor, indeed, is it necessary, to go about armed in these districts—though for precaution's sake any one who is known to travel with money on him may do so—and I myself, for instance—though I have extremely seldom any money on me worth the taking—carry a revolver if I am motoring. This, however, is not for use (except in very unlikely contingencies), but merely as a moral lesson to be displayed in cases of difficulties with wagoners who often attempt wilfully to cause an accident in order to claim compensation. The sight of a revolver very quickly persuades these gentry to reason. Now, in my model village, the priests go armed. The significance of this fact is worthy of attention. They have made their enemies certainly not in the church, or in the execution of their clerical duties, but in pursuing the various speculations they combine with those of the altar. Indeed, the few respectable priests with whom I am acquainted in these parts would not dream of carrying a revolver on their walks abroad.

From the *signoria*, then, the people have nothing to gain in the way of example, and no attempts are made by this class to ameliorate either the moral or physical conditions of those who work for them. When I see all that is done in English rural districts by the wealthier classes, and by the churches, Catholic and Protestant alike, to promote the well-being and social condition of the labourers, and compare this with the complete indifference and neglect under which the working-classes suffer in most parts of Italy, I can only marvel that the Italian peasant is not a far more primitive and inferior being than is the case. A very little tactful organisation on the part of his superiors and of his

Photo] [*Alinari.*

PISA.

parish priests would have more practical and more useful results than any number of miracle-working Madonnas and processsions of the Host.

The difficulty, however, would lie in the impossibility of organisation; and individual efforts infallibly produce far more harm than good. These last at once give rise to jealousies and to suspicions as to their real scope. The priests are the first to discountenance any movement which has for its aim the amelioration of the conditions and mental outlook of the labouring classes by legitimate means; while, as a rule, the employers of labour, especially of agricultural labour, are supremely indifferent to the labourers' welfare, and only concern themselves with getting as much work out of them as they possibly can. The fact is that in Italy, as a general rule, the possession of land carries with it not the slightest sense of responsibility towards the workers on that land. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule; but they are to be found rather among the very great proprietors—and even among these they are rare. There is, I believe, only one large estate in this part of Tuscany, the proprieter of which has for very many years done all in his power to raise the social conditions of his labourers and tenants, and he is of Swiss origin.

The city of Pisa may be said to be in a moribund condition, and there would seem to be but little likelihood of its making any permanent rally. Indeed, if it were not for its University—and even this is threatened with suppression—it is difficult to see what is to prevent the place from becoming anything else than an overgrown village. Its near rival, Livorno, is rapidly absorbing all the trade of the district; its railway service has been reduced to being a comparative nonentity; and even its attractions, such as the Duomo and the Campo Santo, are not sufficient to detain the tourist within its gates more than a few hours, during which he has to pay very dearly for accommodation at extremely uncomfortable and badly managed hotels. The Pisani maintain the unenviable character which they have enjoyed since the days of Dante, and the city is the resort of a very low class of *teppisti*, who give much trouble to the authorities.

Livorno, on the other hand, is progressing fast, and there are many who predict that in the near future it will rival Genoa as a port and as an industrial city. The influential members of the Livornese community are principally Jewish, in origin if not in creed. I fear that the prevailing idea with the Livornesi concerning my compatriots is that all Englishmen are drunkards! and this is due to the disgraceful conduct of the English sailors belonging to the merchant vessels which call at the port. These no sooner come ashore than they resort to the lowest *osterie* and bars in the city, from which they too frequently emerge only to quarrel with and insult passers-by. The behaviour of Italian seamen of a similar class is indeed a contrast. But I regret to say that in every Italian port one finds the British and American sailor regarded with dislike and contempt on account of the scenes which too often accompany his visits; though I doubt not that the scum of the population are quite ready to encourage and take full advantage of his weaknesses.

Photo] [*Alinari.*

THE LAGOON AT ORBETELLO.

South of Leghorn we enter the Tuscan Maremma—that weird yet fascinating country which lies between the seacoast and the hills, and which continues with more or less unbroken wildness and solitude into the Roman province and far onwards until it is lost in the Pontine Marshes.

But here one begins to feel the call of Rome—distant as yet, but none the less compelling—and to Rome we must make our way, though much remains of Tuscan life on which I would have liked to dwell. As this is no guide-book, however, I do not apologise for having left such unvisited places as Siena, Volterra, as well as such lovely districts as the Mugello, and that entrancing country where the Lucchese joins the Garfagnano and the frontier of the old duchy of Modena is passed.

CHAPTER VI

SOCIAL ROME

I SUPPOSE that I shall scarcely be forgiven by many of my English readers for declining to join the ranks of those among my compatriots who are evidently under the impression that it is they, and not the Italians, who ought to manage the internal affairs of the Italian capital. I know quite well that I ought to sigh over the Rome of our fathers' days, and pretend to regret its dirt, squalor, and unhealthiness, its misgovernment and medieval characteristics, because all these things were more or less picturesque and some of them historical. I ought, I am aware, to utter indignant wails over vandalisms daily perpetrated by the modern Romans, like those individuals who, when some ancient piece of building is removed in order to meet the ever-increasing exigencies of a great city such as Rome is rapidly becoming for the second time in her history, write to the *Times* and make allusion to the well-worn epigram concerning *Barbari* and *Barberini* in tones of superiority which, were Italians in general and Romans in particular not endowed with a certain sense of satirical humour, might be annoying.

Far be it from me to say that, in the process of seeking to adapt Rome to the requirements of a great modern capital, much has been hastily swept away which ought, at the cost of any inconvenience, to have been retained; nor that huge sums of money have not been expended on the erection of unsightly buildings and monuments which cause the passer-by to reflect sadly on the inferior taste in architecture and decoration prevailing in this age of progress.

But when all is said and done, what right have foreigners to attempt any active interference with matters in which they can only possess an indirect concern. No doubt it may be argued that the Mother of Cities is, in a sense, the property of the civilised world. But the Mother of Cities is also the capital of the Italian kingdom, and, as such, it is surely the privilege of the Italians to deal with it in such a way as may seem to them to meet their own tastes and requirements. Moreover, there are certainly not lacking prominent Italian critics—men faithful to the highest traditions of art, and full of reverence for the mighty past of Rome—who are ever ready to raise their voice against what may appear to them to be unnecessary destruction of ancient things, and their protests not unnaturally carry far greater weight with the Italian public than the hasty judgments passed by foreign busybodies in English newspapers.

I remember on one occasion, when winged words were flying in the columns of certain of our newspapers regarding some very necessary improvements then being carried out in Rome, suggesting to the editor of one of the leading Roman journals that he should allow me to write for him a series of letters purporting to be from an Italian commenting upon the spirit in which works of a similar kind were being carried out in London; which letters, of course, were to be couched in the same language of complacent superiority and contempt which characterised the criticisms then appearing in the English Press on Roman improvements. The editor was highly amused by the idea; but, on reflection, he declared that no Italian would be at all likely to place himself in such an obviously false position as that of publicly criticising schemes which the authorities in London might consider necessary to the public convenience in their city.

I suppose that no European capital, except it be Berlin, has changed so much in the last quarter of a century as Rome. London, of course, has also changed enormously during this period—a fact for which there is every reason to be profoundly thankful. But the external changes in London are, after all, confined to certain areas, whereas those in Rome have spread themselves more or less over the whole city. But we may well leave the external changes to be discussed by those who have the right to discuss them—and of these, as I have said, there are not wanting many Italians who vigorously denounce what they consider to be unnecessary destruction of time-honoured relics, and are not sparing in their criticisms of modern edifices and adornments which ill harmonise with the atmosphere of the Eternal City.

If the outward appearance of Rome has undergone a change in the last five-and-twenty years, this change is as nothing compared with the change in her internal life. One still comes across certain individuals—"old Romans" I believe they call themselves, being English people who have happened to reside in the place for some number of years—who speak regretfully of the good old times before the Piedmontese occupied the city; and among a certain type of English converts to Roman Catholicism it is the fashion to re-echo the lamentations of their elders. I must confess that, personally, I never knew Rome in those good old times. When I first lived in it, Victor Emanuel II. and Pius IX. had both departed from the scene several years previously, and things were beginning to settle down into their inevitable course. All the same, feeling still ran high between Quirinal and Vatican, and between their respective supporters. In those days, too, I admit, my own sympathies were entirely with the Vatican party. Myself a recent convert, I had come to Rome confident that all things were as I had so often heard them represented to be by the "Black" party. It took me some years to find out that they were not so.

What good old times of tyranny those must have been when the civil government of Rome and the Roman States were directed by ecclesiastics! It is curious to think in these days, of travellers having to give up, at the frontier, all books of suspected orthodoxy which might be among their effects; of eating-house keepers forbidden to serve customers with meat on Fridays or other days of fasting or abstinence, unless their clients could produce the necessary ecclesiastical dispensation; of strict surveillance over everything excepting such details as public health and safety, and the amelioration of the squalor and ignorance in which was sunk the *basso popolo* of the capital and of the entire papal dominions.

The former things have passed away; and, notwithstanding the lamentations over them proceeding from lovers of the picturesque, they are scarcely to be regretted. It is all very well for foreigners with æsthetic tastes to pour out the vials of their wrath on the heads of the Roman authorities because these have the effrontery to regulate their city in accordance with its modern requirements; but artistic and archæological considerations cannot invariably hold the first place at any municipal council-board. I hasten, however, to drop this thorny subject, lest I should be accused of being a greater Philistine than I really am. I would merely point out that none of us like to be told by an outsider how we should manage our own house, and that Italians do not differ from the rest of humanity in this particular.

I suppose I must devote some portion of these Roman chapters to a description of Roman society as it exists at the present time—and here I find myself at once confronted by a considerable difficulty. How, I wonder, should Roman society be defined? There are, to be absolutely ungrammatical, so many of it. There is the *alta società*, which might be supposed to centre round the Court, but which, for reasons presently to be explained, in reality does nothing of the sort. There is the society of the world of politics, of art, of science, and of the *alta borghesia*. Every foreign colony, too, forms a little society of its own, enlarged by passing visitors in the hotels and pensions, who may happen to have some link with it. Then there is the clerical society which centres, to a certain degree, round the Vatican, and round those few great Roman houses which have remained faithful to the former order of things. In addition to all these, there is the diplomatic society which, in direct distinction to its counterpart in London, is all-important in the social life of Rome.

In London the Corps Diplomatique seems to be a body lost in the wilderness. Its members, with the exception of the ambassadors and ambassadresses of the chief powers, and a few secretaries and their wives whose knowledge of the English tongue has enabled them to break down that species of terror which the average Britisher displays when called upon to converse with a foreigner, are little known to the social world, and their invitations are, for the most part, limited to court and official functions, or, at the best, to large entertainments in some of the big houses at which they are lost in a struggling crowd on the staircase. Nobody pays any particular heed to them, and they as likely as not find themselves compelled to fall back on the society of their own colleagues. In Rome, on the other hand, diplomatists and their wives have a great time of it. They are treated as important people; while the ambassadors and heads of missions are veritable personages, accorded an attention only second to that paid to royalty. Moreover, Rome is the only capital in the world in which a double set of embassies exists; namely, those to the sovereign holding his court in the Quirinal, and those to the sovereign who sits secluded in the Vatican. It may be said that the diplomatic society in Rome in a sense dominates all other sections of the social world, inasmuch as the principal embassies are the common ground on which nearly all the social sets come into contact with one another. Only on purely official occasions is the party spirit between Quirinal and Vatican—between the White and the Black parties—now brought into any evidence, and, in all private entertaining, invitations to diplomatic houses are given and taken without reference to political opinions. It is true that the Vatican authorities do not smile on diplomatists accredited to the Holy See frequenting prominent "White" houses or embassies, or asking official members of the "White" world to their own. An exclusive position in these matters, however, is no longer tenable for the Vatican. A second generation is in its prime since the temporal power and civil sovereignty of the Popes fell before the march of progress and the emancipation of the human mind from traditions based upon claims long proved to be imaginary. Many young people belonging to the "Blackest" Roman families have married other young people of the opposite camp, and the pretensions of the Popes to a civil sovereignty are now regarded with almost as little attention by the Romans and Italians generally, as are the vapourings of a certain English society devoted to a *culte* for the descendants of the House of Stuart by the average Englishman.

Officially, however, the comedy is still kept up for political, and also, on the part of one of the parties concerned, for pecuniary, motives. These pages, however, have little to do with politics, nor should I have introduced into them any topics even remotely connected with religious controversy, were it not that in Italy, as, for that matter, in all countries, from its introduction into the world to the present day, Christianity has ever sought to use politics as an extra weapon in its armoury.

Naturally, none of the Corps Diplomatique in Rome accredited to the Holy See can present themselves at the Quirinal, and *vice versa.* When I first was in Rome it was not etiquette for a cardinal to enter a house in which an ambassador to the king, and still less any member of the royal family, might be present. Nowadays, however, many of these rules are relaxed—though, as I have said, in all entertainments of an official nature the line is still rigidly drawn.

Very stately are these official receptions in the great palaces occupied by such embassies to the Holy See as those of Spain and Austria.

The beautiful rooms in the Palazzo di Spagna and in the Palazzo di Venezia, which for long has been the quarters of the Austrian Embassy to the Vatican, are worthy settings for such gatherings. Indeed, even the greatest of our London houses seem mean and cramped when compared with the spacious Roman palaces, with their magnificent staircases and beautifully decorated apartments. When, a few years ago, a well-known Roman prince and princess gave a great ball in honour of the German Emperor and Empress in their famous palace, the Emperor, on taking leave of his hosts and expressing the hope that he should see them in Berlin, added plaintively, "But I shall not be able to show you anything like this!" One of the picturesque sights at official entertainments at the "Black" embassies is that of the cardinals being escorted up and down the staircase by gorgeously attired lackeys bearing torches. The scarlet robes of the princes of the Church, the variety of uniforms and orders, and the magnificent jewels which so many of the Roman ladies possess, form a scene in which the medieval and the modern are curiously intermingled. Cardinals are by courtesy treated as royal princes when they go into the world; but the deference paid them by English Catholics, and especially by converts, is the cause of not a little amusement to the Italians, and, occasionally, not a little embarrassment to their eminences themselves. A Roman lady, on greeting a cardinal, makes a very slight curtsey as she takes his hand, and a man makes a somewhat lower bow than he would do under ordinary circumstances. English people, on the contrary, usually make a deep genuflexion and kiss the ring which the cardinal wears outside his red glove. They generally go through the same process with any ecclesiastic who happens to be of episcopal rank. This excess of religious fervour, however, is in reality quite contrary to the correct rule, by which a bishop's ring is only kissed when its wearer is in his own diocese. In Rome the bishop of the diocese is, of course, the Pope — who does not go to parties. His Holiness, however, delegates his episcopal functions in the Roman diocese to one of the cardinals, who is known as the Cardinal Vicar, and the episcopal ring worn by this dignitary is the only one which it is correct to kiss in Rome, except, of course, that of the Holy Father himself.

The rules regulating precedence in Roman society are many and complicated, and numerous are the blunders into which a host or hostess may fall for want of knowledge of them. Such blunders are, as a rule, good-naturedly overlooked when perpetrated by an unofficial foreigner; but should some official personage, or even some unofficial host or hostess who has been long enough in the Roman world to know better, send his or her guests into dinner out of their due place, the error is apt to be resented.

The etiquette obtaining at the Papal Court is of an extremely stately and impressive kind, and unique in its character and medieval colouring. Most people are acquainted, either by experience or by reading of them, with the pomp and circumstance surrounding the functions in St. Peter's or in the Vatican to which the public are admitted, so it is needless to describe them here. A private audience of the Holy Father is, however, another matter, and perhaps some account of its accompanying feature may be permitted. The individual who is admitted to this honour receives an intimation from the Pope's Maestro di Camera that the Holy Father will receive him on such a day, at such an hour. Formerly, the bearer of this intimation expected, and received, a considerable gratuity; but this abuse has, in common with many others of a similar nature, I believe, been suppressed.

In the case of a man, evening clothes or uniform is *de règle*, and if he is wise he will choose the latter, should a choice be open to him. One's evening clothes are not always in a condition to bear the morning light of Rome, and, at the best, they are apt to suggest a late return from some haunts of dissipation rather than a morning visit to the Head of Christendom. Ladies' attire is limited to high-cut black gowns, with a black lace veil worn, mantilla-wise, on the head; while a scanty amount of jewellery is considered to be correct, and this to be confined to diamonds and colourless stones.

Leo XIII. was more ready to grant private audiences than the present Pontiff—and, indeed, my personal experiences of such matters are limited to his reign. I have confessed that my ideas were "Black" in those days, and this and other circumstances enabled me to have the privilege of being received on many occasions, both alone and in the company of some members of my family. I usually found the interval, passed in the antechamber opening into the Pope's private study, not the least interesting part of the affair; for here one could watch the coming and going of dignitaries of the Church of all nationalities and colours; of the officials of the Papal Court and the officers-in-waiting of the Noble Guard; while, if occasion permitted, one might enjoy a few minutes' conversation with some friend or acquaintance who happened to be in attendance that day. Sometimes an ambassador or minister would pass in or out from the presence, or some Cardinal of the Curia, and then there would be a subdued bustle among the courtiers, and a rattle of steel as the guards saluted. Occasionally, too, Leo XIII. would unexpectedly emerge from his study, and then all present would drop on their knees as he passed. What the twelve Apostles would have thought of it all, I often wondered; but it is of no use to embark upon unprofitable speculations in such matters. Presently one of the monsignori-in-waiting would approach with the intimation that the moment of audience had arrived. I never could help associating, in my mind, that particular instant with the opening of the door of the dentist's waiting-room and the urbane announcement of his servant: "Doctor So-and-so will see *you*, sir."

It is etiquette, on being ushered into the Pope's presence, to make a genuflexion at the door of his apartment; a second, in the centre of the room; and a third, after which one remains kneeling, at his feet. Leo XIII. was a far greater exactor of the formalities than, I believe, is the case with his successor. His slipper, with the embroidered cross upon it, was always displayed in such a manner as to suggest the act of homage of kissing it—though this act, except in the case of ecclesiastics, or under special circumstances, has never, I think, been regarded as in any way obligatory.

No one, whatever his religious or political opinions, could enter the presence of Leo XIII. without recognising that he was in the presence of a great man possessed of a strong will and a keen intellect. I do not remember that he ever alluded to religious matters in any audience he deigned to grant me, and as a rule he did not touch upon political questions. On one occasion, however, he did so. I was quite alone with him, and I never recollect to have passed a more interesting half-hour. On another occasion he described to me his life in London, when he visited England for a short space during his career as a diplomatist. He declared to me that he had lodgings in Regent Street—and I fear the vision conjured up by this announcement caused me to smile. It seemed a somewhat incongruous thoroughfare for a Pope to have lived in, and I have always thought that he must have been mistaken in the locality. He had the greatest admiration for Queen Victoria, and, knowing that my father had been about her Court, he rarely failed to speak of her. One audience remains indelibly impressed upon my mind, for during it occurred a comic incident which caused both me and the two monsignori-in-waiting to shake with suppressed laughter, while the Pope himself was evidently not unmoved, though he pretended not to be aware that anything was wrong.

At the request of a relative of mine who had been granted a private audience, and who was nervous about going through it alone, I succeeded in obtaining permission for my name to be added to the audience-paper, in order that I might accompany her. Being a very devout Catholic, and also very thoughtful of the tenants on her husband's estates in Ireland, she had brought with her a large black bag stuffed full of rosaries, medals, crucifixes, and other objects of devotion which she was anxious that the Holy Father should bless, with a view to distributing them when she returned home. All went smoothly until, at the conclusion of the audience, she asked me to inform the Pope of her anxiety to obtain his blessing on the contents of her bag, and to explain to him that she was taking them to Ireland to give to her Catholic tenants and cottagers. The Pope graciously consented, and nothing remained but to open the bag so that he might bless the numerous articles it contained. Nothing, however, would induce that bag to open. The spring of the lock had stuck fast, and it resisted not only all my efforts, but also those of the monsignori who came to the rescue. Now, to struggle on one's knees with a refractory bag with the Pope looking on is to find oneself in an unusually embarrassing position, as all will admit. A minute or two seemed an hour; but happily the lock at last gave way to our united efforts, during which Leo XIII. appeared to be immersed in thought, and kept his gaze carefully directed into the opposite corner of the room. I am afraid I laughed all the way as we left the papal apartments, much to my relative's annoyance, and so, I strongly suspect, did the Holy Father and his attendants, as soon as the last genuflexion had been made and the door of the presence chamber closed upon us.

I think Leo XIII. owed his singular impressiveness almost entirely to his dominant will and intellectual powers. He had certainly none of the charm of manner which must have been so peculiarly attractive in Pius IX., and which, I believe, is a gift possessed also by Pius X. He was always rather the Sovereign Pontiff than the benevolent and fatherly priest. Apparently, it is true, his features wore a kindly smile; but the keen and hard glance of his remarkably penetrating eyes would have belied that smile even had it really existed as an habitual expression. As a matter of fact, it was no smile at all, but the natural elongation of an unusually wide mouth. His voice, too, was singularly harsh and unmusical. Apart from audiences, I sometimes had the honour of being admitted to his private Mass in the little chapel in his apartments. His intonation when officiating was unlike any sound I have ever heard. I have no wish to be irreverent, but I can only compare it with the sounds one may sometimes hear when a water-pipe is stopped up. When receiving the Sacrament at the Pope's hands, it is obligatory to kiss his ring before he places the Host between the lips of the communicant. Many are unaware of this, and I have known embarrassing pauses ensue in consequence. The monsignore in attendance, however, immediately grasps the situation, and whispers the necessary reminder in the ear of the recipient. After his Mass another is immediately said in his presence; and then the Pope seats himself near one side of the altar, while one by one those who have assisted at the ceremony are presented to him, and he says a few words to each before retiring from the chapel. Leo XIII. kept a large staff of secretaries constantly at work, and he would often rise in the night in order to make some alteration in the draft of a document.

One might imagine that the Papal Court would be more or less free from that spirit of intrigue and the petty jealousies which are supposed to exist in all courts, but this is by no means the case. Indeed, the Vatican has ever been a receptacle into which most of the gossip of Rome quickly finds its way; while internal disagreements and petty envies and jealousies are as common in the apostolic palaces as they are elsewhere. Upon the vexed question of the entirely voluntary seclusion of the Popes within the precincts of the Vatican—though, on the part of the present Pontiff, it may well be doubted if this seclusion is not rather a matter of conformity to policy than a matter of conscience—I will not touch. It is sufficient to say that all parties have an interest in the maintenance of the *status quo*, and no other solution of the many and grave problems which would immediately arise should the Popes emerge from their nominally enforced seclusion could well be found under present circumstances. In all respects the Supreme Pontiff is regarded by the Italian Government as a free and independent sovereign, and all the privileges and honours due to this position are scrupulously accorded to him. His vast correspondence, as well as that of all the different departments connected with the Vatican, and his telegraphic communications, are all free from any charges by the State, and no articles entering his palaces are liable to customs duty.

By the Law of Guarantees a large yearly sum was voted by the Italian Government as an indemnity to the Vatican for its temporal revenues, but this sum has never been touched by the papal government. I often notice a remark in clerical papers, and have heard the same made by persons who disapprove of the presence in Rome of the Italian Government and the Italian Sovereign, to the effect that were the Pope to claim this indemnity, together with its arrears accumulated during forty odd years, the Italian Government would be practically unable to meet the demand. This, however, is an error. By a clause in the said Law of Guarantees arrears of this proffered indemnity which are unclaimed revert to the Italian State at the death of each Pope. The entire Law of Guarantees was rejected by the Vatican at the time of its promulgation, and the Holy See has never officially recognised its existence. It is therefore a futile argument on the part of the enemies of the Italian Government to fix upon the Indemnity Clause in that law, and attempt to disguise or conceal its actual conditions.

Notwithstanding the fact of the virtual rejection by the Vatican of the law in question, the clerical party never ceases to complain that its provisions have not been observed in the past, and that there is no security that the Italian Government would observe them in the future. The charge is utterly untrue. The truth is that the Italian Government has systematically acted up to its self-imposed obligations towards the Vatican, and this not unfrequently in the face of great provocation. There is no occasion, when anti-clerical demonstrations are to be apprehended, that the Italian Government does not act with prompt severity in suppressing any acts hostile to the Vatican; and even when the Pope receives large bodies of pilgrims, or descends into St. Peter's to say Mass, detachments of Italian troops maintain order in the streets leading to the basilica, while the civil authorities are responsible that the fullest liberty should be accorded to the spiritual sovereign in his own domain. The insults offered to the corpse of Pius IX. by a section of the Roman populace, when, in 1881, it was transported from St. Peter's to the basilica of San Lorenzo for interment, are invariably cited as an instance of what the Pope might at any moment have to endure at the hands of the Italians. This incident was certainly a most regrettable and a most scandalous one; but the responsibility for it by no means rested only with the Government. Thousands of priests and clericals were permitted by their leaders to shout "Viva il Papa Re!" as the cortège passed through the streets, thereby provoking recriminations and exciting their opponents to anger. The Government was merely guilty of having believed the representations of the Vatican that the body should be transported quietly, and the precautions taken by it to ensure due respect being paid to the funeral procession were, in consequence, inadequate. Documents relating to this incident have recently been published; and it would be well for those who quote it as a sign of the ill-faith of the Italian Government to peruse them.

As a matter of fact, however, it is only when one compares the perfect liberty and reverence enjoyed by the Popes since the fall of their ill-acquired temporal sovereignty with their position previous to that date, that the falseness of arguments still advanced by ultramontane clericals (of whom the greater number are now probably to be found in the British Empire) is laid bare. How many times in history has Rome not driven Popes out from her gates with insult and ignominy? And what has been the record of the temporal sovereignty of the Vicars of Christ save that of tyranny, persecution, endless wars provoked for the sake of ambition, and the most cynical frauds? Fortunately, however, as I have already said, time, *il galantuomo*, has vindicated the right of the Italians to suppress a purely worldly institution, which for centuries had become not only useless but dangerous to humanity in general, and has shown how the Vatican, stripped of its civil authority, is freer and more independent to work out its spiritual mission than at any period in its long history. If the claims to temporal sovereignty over Rome are still kept up officially, this is due to political and other reasons which my readers must study elsewhere. Having taken them into the palace of the Popes, I will now take them into that other palace, across the Tiber, in which the sovereigns of Italy watch over and work for the destinies of a people who have good reason to love and respect them.

Unlike that other Court at the Vatican, there is little that is stately in the daily life of the King and Queen of Italy, and the rigid etiquette which surrounds crowned heads is only brought into evidence on official and public occasions, and even then it is toned down to suit the democratic instincts of the modern Italians. The sovereigns reside in a remote corner of the vast Quirinal Palace, and it is in the simplest of rooms that the king receives those to whom he accords the honour of an audience. One is introduced into his presence by an aide-de-camp-in-waiting, and the young monarch's kindly manner is not concealed by a certain abruptness with which it is accompanied. Indeed, this abruptness, if anything, rather puts one, not only at one's ease, but also, so to speak, on one's mettle. One instinctively feels that one is meant to talk, and not merely to sit still and listen to the king talking. His questions, and they are apt to be many, are always direct and always practical, and they are questions which require the replies to be not less so. The king speaks English perfectly, and never hesitates to find a word. I recollect, however, his doing so on one occasion. He was speaking of some mechanical appliance and was suddenly brought to a pause by some technical word in English which had escaped his memory. He asked me what the word was in our language, and I was unable to supply him with it. It would, I think, be hard to find any one who could talk so well and so incisively on a large variety of subjects as King Victor Emanuel.

He once told me of some experiences he had had when on board a little sailing yacht he had taken into the Thames and anchored somewhere in the river among the London docks. At that time, of course, he was Prince of Naples, and was on board his little vessel in strict incognito. I am afraid he had not received the best impression of the impeccability of some of the river police, for he told me that perpetual requests were made to those on board for small payments to avoid difficulties with the port authorities over some neglect of purely imaginary rules for vessels lying in the river. I regretted afterwards that I had not told him the experience of an Italian friend of mine who, on coming to London for the first time, got out of the train at Cannon Street under the impression that he had arrived at Charing Cross. His handbags were put on a cab, which he directed to drive to the hotel he had selected, and all went well until, after driving for about half an hour, the cabman pulled up and informed him that he was not allowed to proceed farther, but that another cab would take him on to his destination. The cabman likewise demanded ten shillings as his fare. My friend, who had some hazy ideas in his mind concerning the peculiar privileges of the city of London, fell into the trap, and after paying the fare asked was driven off in another cab to his hotel, where a second fare of ten shillings was demanded, and he was left under the impression that London must be the most expensive city in the world in which to hire public conveyances. Indeed, the taking-in of innocent foreigners was what caused the king to relate his experiences of our river police, if for no other reason than to demonstrate that it is not in Italy alone that the foreigner is apt to be exploited.

Shortly after the discovery of radium I happened to take to Rome with me one of Sir William Crookes' little tubes with a magnifying glass, in which was an infinitesimal amount of salts of radium. It was the first that had ever been seen in Italy, and I showed it to various people in Rome. Soon afterwards I received an intimation to the effect that the king and queen would like to see it, and that they would receive me one evening after dinner. I went to the Quirinal, and found them quite alone, with only one of the queen's ladies and an aide-de-camp in attendance. The king asked me so many searching questions as to the properties of radium that I was obliged to tell His Majesty that I knew nothing whatever about it beyond having read what every one had read concerning it in the newspapers. I must confess that the handing of the tube to him and the queen in complete darkness, and fear lest I might miscalculate distances and bring it into violent contact with the royal noses was a little embarrassing, but the absence of all formality and the keen interest displayed by both the king and queen made everything easy.

All the world knows how both King Victor and Queen Elena work for the good of their people; how they are the first to be on the spot when danger or disease threatens, and are ever ready to share any peril which may menace the country. Their example in the terrible time of the earthquakes in Sicily and Calabria is fresh in the memory of all, and there is no Italian worthy of the name, be he republican, socialist, or even anarchist, who, however much he may be opposed to royalty as a system, does not recognise their devotion and their personal courage in the face of national danger and distress. Nor is this devotion limited to the mitigation of national disasters. Private suffering equally experiences their sympathy and practical aid; and Queen Elena's works of mercy and charity, and the king's generosity and quick initiative, are matters to which thousands in all parts of their dominions can testify.

The popularity of the queen-mother, too, is immense. Queen Margherita occupies the palace which was built by Prince Piombino to replace the ancient Palazzo Piombino in Piazza Colonna. Here she maintains her own Court, which in some respects is more typically Royal than that of the Quirinal. Intellectual, and highly appreciative of all that is artistic, Queen Margherita, too, is perfectly at home in the English tongue, and a great reader of English literature. There is more formality connected with an audience with her than in the case of one with the king. As on entering the presence of the Pope, so, when introduced to the presence of the queen-mother, three low bows (not, of course, genuflexions as at the Vatican) are *de rigueur*, and at the conclusion of the audience the visitor is expected to back out of the room, only turning as he or she reaches the door. Her Majesty's drawing-room is of considerable length, and the process of making a good shot for the exit behind one is attended with many risks of disaster. It is as well carefully to locate the furniture before embarking on the return journey.

The etiquette of the House of Savoy makes it impossible for the Italian sovereigns to mix in the society of the capital as is the case with our own royalties. Except on special occasions, usually in the case of an embassy of some great power, or an entertainment given in honour of a foreign sovereign, the king and queen cannot be in the position of guests. Perhaps this restriction is not altogether an advantage to Roman society, since it unquestionably limits the influence of the Court in social matters, and deprives it of that figure-head which a Court should supply. I am, of course, only giving vent to the opinion of a foreigner who has little or no business to have an opinion on such a matter; but I have always thought that Roman society suffers not a little from the fact that the Court is so much a thing apart from it, the Court entourage forming rather a clique than an active partner in the *haute société* of the capital. But, I repeat, this is a mere conjecture, and doubtless reasons far more important than social considerations exist to render necessary such comparative aloofness.

In many ways the society of Rome has changed greatly in the last few years. Formerly the Romans were apt to be content with receiving the hospitality of the strangers within their gates who had the means to offer it, without greatly concerning themselves as to who or what these strangers might be in their own country. The great families of the north, and those of Naples and the south, largely kept to their own local capital cities, in which they had their own society and often entertained on a princely scale. The result on Roman society undoubtedly was that it became a happy hunting-ground for foreign adventurers, among whom Americans and English were prominent. At one time the American invasion threatened to sweep all before it. American marriages were the fashion, and Americans located themselves in historic palaces and played at being Roman princes. During the last few years, however, a change has spread over the scene, and an inner section of Roman society has arisen which is strong enough and rich enough to keep foreign social adventurers outside it. This section is reinforced by the yearly advent to Rome for the "season" of the representatives of the *aristocrazia* in the other great cities, and in consequence there is now a nucleus which is the genuine Roman society as distinct from the heterogeneous and cosmopolitan society which has its centre in the embassies and the houses belonging to wealthy foreigners. Indeed, as has been the case in London for very many years, what is called Society has in self-defence had to break itself up into cliques, and though the number and dimensions of these cliques in Rome is necessarily very limited, their appearance has made a considerable change in the traditions of Roman social life.

There yet remain some relics of the exclusively "Black" society, which in days gone by prided itself on admitting to its salons only those who shared the political ideas of the Vatican. It must be confessed, however, that they are very mouldy relics, and the few "Black" salons which survive have to hunt up their recruits among foreign Catholics, whose somewhat aggressive piety would not unfrequently appear to be their sole passport into the company in which they find themselves. Naturally enough, Rome is the earthly paradise of professional saints; and any observant person possessed of a sense of humour may enjoy himself mightily in watching the climb up the social ladder of individuals of both sexes belonging to this category who have come to Rome in the hopes of being admitted into the society of those who can boast of the possession of coronets in this world, while improving their own chances of wearing a crown in the next.

It is not difficult to acquire a papal title. Indeed, it is only necessary to be in a position to devote a certain amount of money to the enterprise, expending it in aid of "religious" institutions, and in judicious advertisement of the sums thus given, and not to hide the light of your Catholic fervour under a bushel. Of course, the business must be tactfully worked, and the sympathies of the right dignitaries of the Vatican duly secured. Perfect gravity is occasionally hard to maintain when some individual, often of Irish extraction, is pompously announced as "the Marquis"—or "the Duke——M'Grady of Ballyblarney," or some such name. How often have I not regretted that Thackeray did not keep Becky and Major Loder longer in Rome, and that Monsieur Fiche, who, by the way, himself blossomed out into a baron shortly afterwards, frightened the little woman away!

As in Florence, the various foreign colonies in Rome find their society among each other; and this is especially the case with the British colony, which —and here I will return to Thackeray again—carries with it its pride, pills, prejudices, Harvey sauces, cayenne peppers, and other Lares, making a little Britain wherever it settles down. I have not much acquaintance with it, and so no doubt am mistaken; but its principal occupation would appear to be to rhapsodise about Rome and revile the Romans.

As might be expected, there is a large artistic and scientific section in Roman society, and in this the feuds perpetually raging between eminent archæologians, native and foreign, are a never-failing source of interest and amusement. There is one particular salon in which the leading lights of this society congregate, the hostess of which is herself one of the most talented and learned ladies in Europe, and a member, to boot, of one of Rome's most illustrious and historical families, whose pedigree goes back for more than a thousand years, and whose honours are in no way due to papal ancestors, though it has given Popes to the papal throne. Here one may meet the learned of all nations, and the political, artistic, and literary world is always well represented. I suppose the Countess ——'s salon has a world-wide reputation, and it certainly must be satisfactory to its amiable and intellectual hostess to feel that almost every eminent individual, in whatever line and of whatever nationality, who happens to come to Rome, is sooner or later the recipient of her kindly hospitality. Her dinners, perhaps, are even more appreciated than her parties, which, as a matter of fact, are not parties, but impromptu gatherings, at which one may find ten people, or one may find a hundred. At her dinners, her wit, which is sometimes satirical, sometimes even caustic, but never ill-natured, is apt to burst out at unexpected moments; and she possesses, to a greater degree, I think, than any one I know, that gift belonging to really clever people of leading others on to talk their best while she herself, knowing more of the subject probably than the talkers, plays the part of a sympathetic listener.

There are other salons in Rome in which intellectual achievements count for more than birth or wealth; but I have mentioned this particular one not only because it is in some ways unique, but also because it has been for very many years regarded as a sort of institution in Roman society, and because not only Rome, but all Italy, admires and respects its talented mistress.

Undoubtedly the pleasantest feature of society in Rome are the informal visits after dinner which may be paid to any hostess who has invited one to pay them, and this invitation once given is intended to apply to any night on which the giver may happen to be at home. One may go to find oneself practically alone with one's hostess and her family, or find a gathering which differs in no way from a party. There is no stiffness, and no uncomfortable standing about, for, as a rule, the Roman drawing-rooms are spacious enough to seat any reasonable number of people. People come in and go away without vain excuses or apologies—and, indeed, it is only in England that visitors, after remaining perhaps an unconscionable time, think it necessary to give vent to some obviously untruthful excuse for getting up and going away. A cup of tea, or some lemonade and a sandwich or two are considered ample provision for guests on such occasions, for it is not yet supposed that people cannot meet in society without being provided with an elaborate supper. Probably in one of the rooms bridge will be in process, but this does not put a stop to conversation, and those who do not wish to play are never made to feel that their presence is undesirable. Unless one is an intimate, one is not supposed to prolong one's visit unduly, and as the majority of people have several calls of a similar kind to pay in the course of the evening, twenty minutes or half an hour is the most they can devote to one of them.

The Romans have of late years become much more addicted to sports and out-of-door life than was formerly the case. Fox-hunting, of course, has for nearly a century been an institution; and whereas it used to be confined to a limited number of supporters, augmented by English visitors, there are now large "fields" in which not only Romans, but sportsmen from all parts of Italy are represented, while many Italian ladies are keen and bold riders. And, indeed, good horsemanship and good nerve are very necessary when hunting in the Roman Campagna. The stiff timber fences require much negotiating on the part of both the horses and their riders. Of late years stag-hunting, also, has been instituted, and the magnificent old feudal castle of Bracciano, belonging to Prince Odescalchi, about fifty miles from Rome, is the headquarters of the staghounds. Thither those who care for this kind of "sport" are conveyed with their horses by train. The deer, however, are "carted," and, in the opinion of the present writer at all events, it would be well in the interests of humanity were all such methods of hunting to be everywhere abolished.

Motor-cars, of course, have revolutionised the social life of Rome as they have that of London. Picturesque and historic places without number, which were formerly as good as inaccessible, are now favourite excursions. The only drawback is the vileness of the roads. All roads, as we know, lead to Rome; but the nearer they approach the walls of the Eternal City, the more abominable do they become!

CHAPTER VII

MILITARY MATTERS

ALTHOUGH Italy is a military nation, her militarism is by no means aggressive, by which I mean to say that there is none of that friction between soldiers and civilians which so frequently occurs in countries where the Army is placed on a pedestal apart from and above other sections of the community. Notwithstanding that Rome is the headquarters of an Army Corps, and that the garrison of the city consists of about ten thousand men, the military element is singularly unobtrusive when compared with that existing in other continental capitals. The officers who are admitted into the *alta società* of the Italian capital are extremely few in number; and these few, as a rule, belong to the cavalry regiments, into which the *nobiltà* for the most part prefer to enter. As a matter of fact, the officers of the infantry regiments do not, in the majority of cases, greatly differ from their non-commissioned officers and men in birth and breeding; and, indeed, it is by no means uncommon to find a private soldier who is a far more polished gentleman than very many who are his military superiors. The longer I live in Italy the more I realise that education, at all events among Italians, in no way implies refinement of tastes and ideas, and that those subtle qualities which go to make what we call a gentleman are inherent in countless Italians whose schooling has from force of circumstances been limited to what his native *paese* could supply.

Conscription, as everybody knows, is in force in Italy. With certain exceptions all who have reached the age of twenty are obliged to serve in the Army or the Navy. In the former the term of service, except in the cavalry regiments, has lately been reduced from three to two years. But even at the conclusion of this term an Italian is not a free man until he has reached the age of forty. He may at any moment be called upon to undergo periodical trainings in camp, or to take part in manœuvres. It is obvious that such a system must entail an immense dislocation in civil life, and that it must frequently cause serious detriment to the private interests of the individuals from whom such a sacrifice is demanded. The fact, however, that this sacrifice is, on the whole, cheerfully made by the modern Italians is a proof that the common advantages ensuing from it outweigh the undoubted hardships it involves. That conscription is, or ever can be, popular either in Italy or elsewhere could only be maintained by a confirmed militarist. It is, unquestionably, the most odious form of interference with the liberty of the subject. I do not suppose that there exists an Italian who does not recognise it as an evil; but neither do I imagine that it would be easy to find one who was not ready to admit that it is an evil which has been productive of inestimable good. Few people who have not lived side by side with the lower classes in Italy, and who have not had occasion to be behind the scenes of their daily existence, can, I think, realise the prodigious sacrifice that universal conscription entails on a nation. On the other hand, none but these, perhaps, can better estimate the enormous advantages, both physical and moral, that it brings in its train.

When one sees a young lad who, perhaps, is gaining not only his own livelihood, but adding to that of his parents, obliged to give up his employment for two whole years in order to serve in the Army; when one knows that instead of the earnings he has placed at their disposal for the good of the family, his parents have to supply him with money in order that he may have means to provide himself with food and drink more palatable than that with which he will be supplied by the military authorities; when one sees some promising young employé or artisan compelled to relinquish a hardly won post at the very outset of his career—then one is apt to curse conscription and wonder at the patience of a people that can submit to its tyranny. But when, on the other hand, one compares the youth who returns to his native village or town with the same youth who left it as a conscript, one is obliged to confess that he has usually been the gainer by his sacrifice. In nine cases out of ten he returns from his military service a stronger man both physically and morally than when he entered it; and if he does not do so, it is fairly certain that under any circumstances he would have been no credit either to himself or the community. He has experienced discipline, and through discipline he has learned to command not only himself but others. Any one who has followed the vicissitudes of Italian rural life will have had occasion to observe the effect of two or three years of discipline and military training on peasant lads and on youths in the small country towns. He will notice, too, how superior the men who have returned from military service in the last six or seven years are to those who served their term previous to this period.

The conditions of military life have been steadily improving in Italy under the reign of the present sovereign. As Prince of Naples, King Victor made himself thoroughly acquainted with every detail of the soldier's life; and in the ameliorations which have taken place in that life in the last few years his influence may in all probability be traced. Formerly the soldier was regarded as little more than a machine by the military authorities. Little was done either to educate him or to raise him in his own estimation. Barracks were, in the majority of cases, merely monastic buildings hastily re-adapted to secular purposes, and lacking everything conducive to sanitation and personal cleanliness; while little or no attempt was made to provide reading and recreation rooms for the men. The enforcement of a rigid discipline was considered to be the only duty of the State towards those who were to be its slaves for three or more years, and this, unaccompanied by any refining element, tended rather to brutalise than to elevate the soldier's character. Nowadays, however, all this is changed. The Italian soldier is no longer treated as little better than an ox or a mule. The military authorities have recognised that strict discipline is by no means incompatible with civilising and refining elements in barrack life. Education, study, and legitimate recreations are encouraged, and the modern barracks, especially in Rome, are models of their kind. Men are no longer obliged, as formerly, to go out of barracks in order to find the commodities of civilised life; and leisure hours are not, in consequence, invariably wasted in idling about the cities and frequenting undesirable places. The effects produced by this introduction of more civilising elements into the soldier's life are, as I have said, fully apparent. Not only does the average conscript return to his home a far more useful and efficient member of society than he was when he left it, but the unpopularity of enforced military service has been greatly reduced. There is, perhaps, room for still further improvement in these ways; but so much has been done even in the last five or six years to raise the tone of barrack life, and to encourage self-respect in the soldier, that doubtless the conscript of ten years hence will enjoy advantages as great by comparison as those which the conscript of to-day enjoys when these are compared with the experiences of his predecessors.

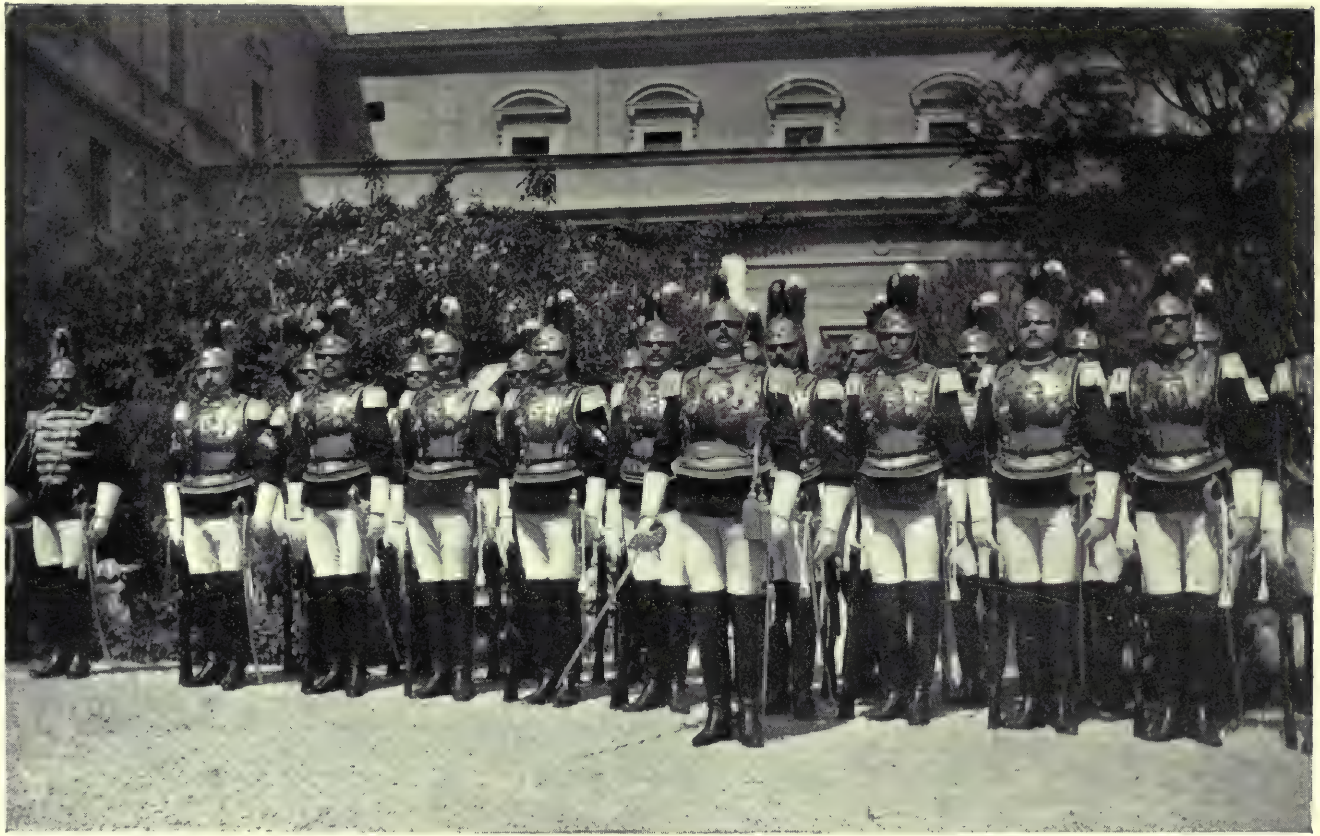
The Italian soldier's day begins early. In the spring and summer months the *risveglio* sounds from the bugles at 4.30 a.m., and in winter an hour later. Then, if he chooses, before drill or instruction he can have some black coffee and a piece of bread. At ten o'clock the *rancio* is served out, consisting of soup and the boiled meat from which it has been made, and a measured quantity of brown bread.

Wine is supplied once a week in barracks, and twice daily in camp and on marches. After this more drill until twelve o'clock, when two hours' repose is obligatory, and the men are supposed to spend them in sleep. From two o'clock till half-past four or five there is more drill or instruction, and at five the soldier is free to leave barracks until nine o'clock in summer and half-past eight in winter. By those hours, unless he have a *permesso*—which to men of good conduct is accorded readily enough—he must present himself in barracks again. A *permesso* usually extends the hours of liberty until eleven o'clock; but if granted nominally for the purpose of going to the theatre, it may be prolonged until midnight, or even one o'clock. Half an hour after the bugles have sounded the *ritirata* they sound the *silenzio*—and after this no talking is permitted in the dormitories. The private soldiers usually sleep twelve in a room, and in each room an electric light is kept burning through the night. This routine, of course, is perpetually being varied by long marches both by night and day, and in the summer months by instruction camps and manœuvres. The marches undertaken by such regiments as the Bersaglieri, who march at the rate of five miles an hour over any ground, and the Granatieri, are often extremely severe, sixty miles not being considered anything specially remarkable.

Perhaps the most disagreeable of the many duties Italian soldiers are called upon to fulfil is that of maintaining public law and order in times of strikes and social and political agitation. The Army, indeed, may be said to exist quite as much to defend

Italy against internal enemies as against external ones. The patience and good-temper with which the troops often meet the grossest provocation on the part of unruly and ignorant mobs are worthy of all praise. But it is not only at moments of social unrest that the Italian soldier is called upon to display his discipline and, very often, his personal courage. It is considered incumbent on any man wearing the King's uniform to render aid wherever it may be needed for the protection of life and property, and for the repression of crime. In cases, too, of disasters owing to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other causes, the troops are the first to bring assistance and encouragement where, it must be confessed, the civil authorities have not unfrequently displayed considerable incompetence and carelessness. It is no wonder, therefore, that the nation at large regards the Army as a protector at home, and as a great moral weapon available at any moment against the unruly forces not only of humanity, but also against those of Nature, to the violences of which whole districts and populations are apt to be suddenly exposed.

The fine horsemanship of the Italian cavalry is now recognised all over Europe; and any one who is fortunate enough to assist at one of the practices at Tor di Quinto just outside Rome will see marvellous feats performed by both officers and troopers. A magnificent corps, too, is that of the Corazzieri—the King's Body-Guard. It must be owned that for smartness, and for the physique of its members, as well as for the *tout ensemble* of men and horses, the Corazzieri are far more imposing than our own



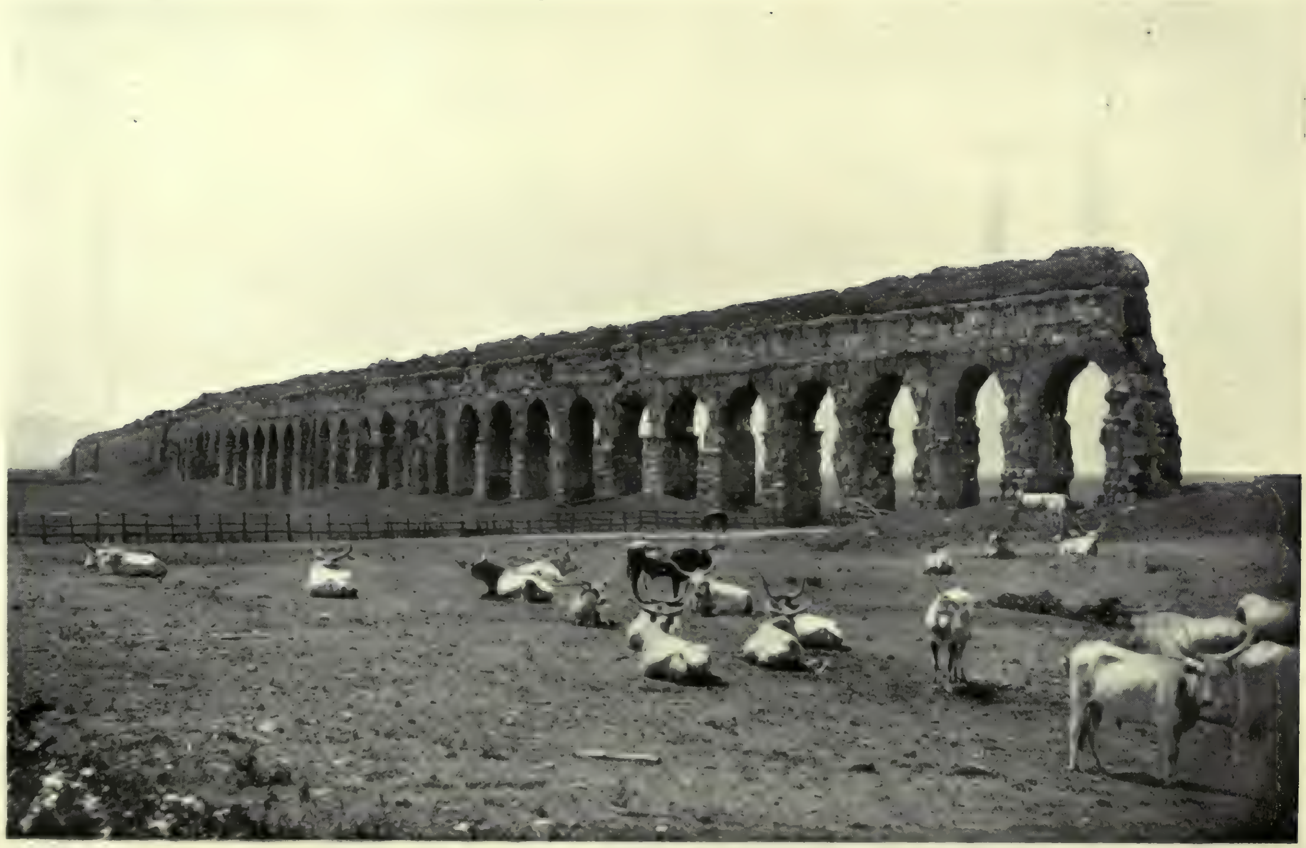
A GROUP OF CORAZZIERI.

Household Cavalry. It must be remembered, however, that they are all picked men, numbering not more than a hundred to a hundred and fifty in all. It is difficult to believe that the large majority of the Corazzieri are peasants. They are, as a rule, magnificent specimens of humanity—tall, well-made, and comely of feature. Moreover, a very few months in the atmosphere of royal functions and palaces rid them of all uncouthness; for the Italians of all classes are nothing if not adaptable; and, at any rate, an outward refinement of manners and habits comes easily enough, as a rule, even to the lowest.

As is the case in all countries, I suppose, the Italian soldier knows instinctively whether the officers of his company are *veri signori*, or not. It is also the case in Italy, as elsewhere, that the officers who are gentlemen by birth and breeding are almost invariably far more just and considerate to their men than those who are not so. Unfortunately, as I have before mentioned, the Italian officer is very often inferior in all ways, save for a certain education that his purse has been long enough to procure for him, to many of the men under his command; and not the least hard part of the salutary discipline that many an Italian private soldier has to undergo is that of submitting to sometimes unreasonable caprices of an officer whom he knows to be in every way his social inferior, and in many ways perhaps his moral and intellectual inferior also. It is true that a conscript belonging to the wealthier classes may, by paying a sum of twelve hundred francs, serve for a year only as a *volontario*, and these last have certain minor privileges accorded to them. These, however, do not exempt them from being obliged to perform the same duties and lead the same life as any peasant or working-man who is serving for the full term. He sleeps and eats with these last, and is one of them while on duty or in barracks; and it is only during his hours of liberty that he may dissociate himself from them and go his own way. By no means all, however, can afford to find this sum of twelve hundred francs, even among the educated and better-born conscripts; and it is to such as these that the military service is the most disagreeable—for reasons that are obvious. Nevertheless, I have known more than one young lad, gentlemen in every sense of the word, decline to allow their parents to make any pecuniary sacrifice to enable them to join as *volontarî*; and some, too, I have known of who, although perfectly able to pay the required money, have preferred to go through their full term of service for the sake of experience and adventure.

The percentage of those who elect to remain in the Army as a profession (apart, of course, from the officers) is very small. In the general way the victim to conscription regards his term of military service in precisely the same manner as a schoolboy regards the term he has to spend at school. His thoughts are perpetually centred on the day when he will be called up before his colonel to receive his *congedo*, and during his last few months in the Army he counts the days and weeks, as we most of us can remember doing when our school term was drawing to its close. This, no doubt, will be taken as evidence of an entire lack of the military spirit; and there can be no question that this spirit is not naturally inherent in the average Italian; nor do I, for one, consider that he is the worse for its comparative absence. I believe, on the contrary, that this very absence of militarism adds a thousand-fold to the credit of the Italian soldier. He has little hope of earning honour or glory, and none at all of earning profit; for, indeed, he is always considerably out of pocket by the sacrifice he is making for his country. He does not want to fight anybody, and the idea of warfare against other nations is as a rule profoundly distasteful to him. Nevertheless, he would defend his own country with the last drop of his blood; and he fully recognises that until better counsels prevail abroad, and wiser heads control the masses at home, his country must perforce maintain a large-standing Army and Navy.

Considering all that the average Italian conscript gives up, and the duties he is called upon to discharge; considering that from the time he is twenty until he has reached forty he cannot call himself a free man; considering, too, that soldiering is often absolutely repugnant to his nature and ideas, I venture to doubt whether there be any nation that could show so universal a spirit of quiet and unobtrusive determination and self-sacrifice as that shown by the modern Italians. That the one war into which they were forced against their will by unscrupulous speculators of the worst kind ended disastrously can never fairly be brought forward as a proof of want of courage or lack of discipline on the part of the Italian soldier. That story is too discreditable a one to be enlarged upon in these pages; neither should we English, of all nations, be justified in bringing it forward. The tragic days of the Abyssinian campaign, however, reflected no discredit on the Italian soldiers who fought in it; but only on those who without common foresight or methods of organisation sent them to fight against overwhelming odds in a corrupt cause, which was certainly not national, however much it may have been individual.



Photo] [Anderson.

THE ROMAN CAMPAGNA.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME ROMAN CHARACTERISTICS

ONE of the principal charms of Rome, if such a paradox may be allowed, consists in the getting out of it. The old Romans found it so; and the modern Romans, though they no longer build stately villas in its vicinity, are by no means insensible to the attractions of the many beautiful districts which are now brought within comparatively easy distance of the city. The middle and lower classes have traditional seasons when a *scampagnata* is considered absolutely necessary—during, for instance, the lovely days of May, and again during the vintage. A jaunt without the city gates in the golden days of October is known among them as an *Ottobrata*; and it is perhaps in this latter season that one may best study the habits and customs of the Roman populace. I cannot conscientiously say that these habits and customs are always edifying. Indeed, they are apt to be very much the reverse. Mention has already been made of the excessive number of *spacci di vino* where wine and other more harmful beverages are sold; and a weakness for over-indulgence in his native vintages is, unfortunately, a widespread failing among the Romans not only of the lowest classes, but also among those in which one would scarcely expect to find it. In this respect the Romans compare badly with the far more sober Tuscans; and the consequence is that whereas a Tuscan family out for a day's holiday will conduct itself almost invariably in an orderly and decorous manner, a Roman family of the same class too frequently turns what should be a healthy and happy pleasure excursion into an orgy, which is apt to end in quarrels, and, sometimes, among the less reputable, in the use of the knife.

As I have broached this disagreeable subject, I may say at once that the stereotyped British idea that every Italian carries a knife in his pocket which he will use on the slightest provocation is an enormously exaggerated one. To begin with, the law prohibits the carrying of any knife the blade of which measures more than seven centimetres in length, and the police have the right, which is frequently exercised, of searching any individual whom they may suspect of infringing this law. It cannot be denied, however, that the knife still figures far too prominently in Italian quarrels, and especially among the Romans and the inhabitants of the Latin province. Its use, luckily, has greatly diminished in recent years; and there can be no doubt that were Italian juries to refuse to admit any extenuating circumstances in cases in which it is employed, and were the punishment for its use to be made ruthlessly severe, this barbarous means of aggression or defence would soon become, if not extinct, at all events as rare as it is with us or in other countries north of the Alps. Murderers, of course, there will always be, in all countries; but in the majority of cases among the Italian lower orders in which the knife is used in a quarrel there is little or no premeditation, and by no means always a desire to kill. In nine cases out of ten, wounding and homicide are the direct results of drink. The strong Roman wines go quickly to the head, and an uneducated man under its influence loses all sense of control, and becomes practically insane for the moment. I am, of course, only referring to such crimes as are committed in the heat of passion; for it is these which Italian justice is apt to treat with surprising lenity. Homicides, on the other hand, in which premeditation can be proved, are often punished by lifelong imprisonment, under conditions which make capital punishment merciful in comparison.

The curse of the Roman population is—wine. The number of places in which it is sold is nothing less than a public scandal, and men, women, and children are ruined in health and character by excessive drinking at all hours of the day and night. A visit to any one of the Roman hospitals affords ample proof that it is altogether a fallacy to believe, as many do believe, that the results of abuse of wine are less deleterious than those of spirituous liquors. The latter may destroy more quickly, but the former, though more insidious, is equally fatal in the long-run. Tuberculosis in all its forms rages among the lower classes in Rome and the Roman provinces—and this is in almost every case traceable to intemperance—which, in a country where wine is the common drink, does not imply what is usually implied by the term alcoholism. The crying evil of the multiplicity of *osterie* has been seriously occupying the attention of the late Government; and measures were to be taken to mitigate it. But it is to be feared that much water will flow under the Ponte San Angelo before anything is really done in the matter.

The unstable condition of Italian governments, owing to the numerous party groups and dissensions in the Camera, is a serious obstacle to any consecutive policy of social reforms; and many excellent measures are framed which are destined to be shelved while party intrigues are making and unmaking Cabinets and Ministers. There can be no doubt that a Minister who had the determination to introduce a drastic law under which a great percentage of the wine-shops—the chief propagators of disease and crime throughout the country—could be suppressed would have conferred a signal benefit on the Italian race. It is to be feared, however, that, as in the case of the late Prime Minister, Signor Luzzatti, no sooner had such a measure been decided upon, than he would find himself out of office, and his bill abandoned or its consideration by the Camera adjourned *sine die.*

Another evil, which has been introduced into Italy from abroad, is that of drinking-bars. These pernicious institutions have spread rapidly through all the towns, great and small. They are, of course, frequented by a higher clientele than the *osterie*; but their effect is equally deteriorating, and their number is becoming nearly as excessive in proportion as the more humble places of their kind. The testimony of the leading Italian doctors and surgeons on the incalculable harm done to the public health both physical and mental by the introduction of these baneful foreign institutions is unanimous. The fact is, that neither the Italian constitution nor the Italian climate permits of abuse of alcoholic drinks in any form; and intemperance, which may be injurious to a minor degree to those belonging to Northern races, becomes positively dangerous in the case of those born south of the Alps.

It is to be feared that Rome will never become an industrial city, unless the temperament of the Roman lower classes should alter considerably. The ancient love for feasting and amusement seems to have survived most of the old Roman traditions. Work of all kinds is constantly interrupted on the slightest of excuses; and almost every conceivable article which could perfectly well be supplied by the Romans themselves has to be brought from other cities, or from abroad. The large shops which maintain their own manufactories or workshops are extremely few. It does not pay them to do so; for the Roman workman will cheerfully abandon his occupation and sacrifice his day's wages in order to keep the *festa* of some more or less imaginary saint, which he usually does by spending a great deal more than he can afford in the *osterie.* The State has for long combated this entirely *pseudo*-religious spirit, and only the greatest festivals of the Church are recognised as public holidays. But the clergy, of course, do all in their power to insist upon all useful occupation being abandoned in honour of saints and madonnas, and quite fail to realise, or, perhaps, refuse to realise that a day's honest work is far better than twenty minutes spent in listening to the gabbling of a Mass and the remaining hours in eating, drinking, and gambling.

I have no wish to enter into controversial subjects in these pages; but when I hear people at home descanting upon the marvellous unity to be found in the Roman Church, and contrasting it with the divergence of opinion existing among Protestants, I cannot help wondering whether they have ever taken the trouble to test for themselves the genuineness of this asserted unity. I would ask any one, for instance, to pick out at hazard ten Italian Catholics belonging to the middle and lower classes who would be able to give any comprehensible definition of the Mass, and still less to give the meaning of any portion of its language. I have spoken with countless individuals in all parts of Italy belonging to those classes, individuals who were regular in their attendance at Mass on Sundays and holidays, and I have seldom found anything but the most naïve and profound ignorance as to what the priest had been saying or doing beyond "making the Santissimo." I have found, in the majority of cases, the most contemptuous disbelief in every one of the dogmas of that Faith which it is the custom to consider as held by all classes of the Roman communion. It is not unity of faith which constitutes the power of the Church in Italy, but unity of interest. Of faith there is extremely little, and of the most cynical scepticism a great deal; but of vested interests in a powerful national and racial institution there is, as I have already attempted to show in the chapters in this book dealing with Tuscan life, an altogether preponderating amount.

And if this deeply rooted scepticism is particularly noticeable in the central Italian provinces it is even more so in Rome itself.

The priests, of course, and the clerical organs in the Press, attempt to attribute the indifference to dogmatic belief which permeates all classes of modern Italian society to the corrupting influences of the Freemasons. As a matter of fact, however, Freemasonry has very little to do with it. The revolt against dogma is the natural revolt of the intellect against that which ever seeks to stultify thought and render it barren. Moreover, the revolt is, in Italy as in Germany, no longer confined to the laity, but, as exemplified by "Modernism," it is spreading rapidly among the ranks of the younger and more enlightened clergy. In vain the present Pope and his advisers attempt to stem this intellectual revolt against medieval frauds and superstitions forced upon the world by the Vatican. Their dread of the emancipation of the human intellect from the bonds of medieval dogma was clearly displayed by Pius the Tenth's recent attempt to compel each individual priest to subscribe to a form of oath declaring himself to hold the "Modernist" views in anathema. The clergy, doubtless, will have to give way. Their bread and butter depends upon their so doing. But papal fulminations no longer have any effect upon the great mass of the Italian laity; and the days are for ever gone by, except among women, and among the most ignorant and illiterate of the population, when threats or applications of spiritual penalties in this world or the next are seriously regarded.

As to Italian Freemasonry, like Italian Socialism, it must not be confounded with its English counterpart. Unlike Freemasonry in England, Freemasonry in Italy is little better than a species of Tammany. It is an organisation born of bureaucracy which, under the mask of fighting the corruption and tyranny of the priests, is itself tyrannical and corrupt to the last degree. The Jacks-in-office of Italian bureaucracy are its mainstay and support—but the average Italian of the working-classes is too shrewd to be entrapped by its specious pretensions, and he regards it with as much distrust as he does the priests.

Although the average Roman—I am speaking entirely of the mass of the people—concerns himself but little with dogma, he attends Mass fairly regularly; but his attendance is rather due to custom than to any special belief in, or, indeed, genuine comprehension of, the stupendous mystery therein represented. Having, as a well-known lady of society in mid-Victorian times was wont to express it, done the civil thing by the Almighty, he feels himself at liberty to dispose of the remainder of the day as he pleases. Perhaps this impression exists equally among many of the most outwardly orthodox in the Anglican communion, only they do not happen to be possessed of Lady ——'s cynical frankness. The doings of the Vatican trouble him not at all; except, perhaps, so far as they may regard his politics. He knows very well that the Spirito Santo has little enough to do with the making of Popes, and he is quite likely to smile quietly at the idea; while the whole category of Catholic dogma contained in the Creeds, excepting only the confession of faith in the First Person of the Trinity, he will probably dismiss with a shrug of the shoulders and the observation—"Storie dei preti." For him, the semi-divine atmosphere with which foreign Catholics believe the Vatican to be surrounded does not exist. His seat is too near the stage, and the working of the *mise en scène* is too familiar to him. He cannot in the least understand why you, or any one, should trouble to reason on questions of belief. He himself takes them as he finds them — or, rather, he passes them by with that supreme indifference to which, I think, only the Latin mind can successfully attain in matters of religious faith. He is not by any means atheistic — it is rare in Italy to find a genuine atheist, though many profess to be so. He merely regards the numberless doctrines and dogmas of the Church as part of the stock-in-trade of an institution in which he feels he has some inherited and traditional stake, and he looks upon them in his secret heart as inventions necessary to the maintenance of that institution.

I am quite aware that all I have said here will be indignantly contradicted by many of my possible readers, who will accuse me of writing against the Church. I am, however, not concerned with the Church, but merely with certain features of the Italian attitude towards its teachings. That this attitude is characteristic of the Latin mind, or at any rate of the Italian mind, cannot be denied.

It can be traced throughout the Middle Ages, and even Popes themselves have not always been free from it. Nor, I submit, can any one who has interested himself in these matters sufficiently to discuss them not only with his own class, but with individuals of all classes and in all parts of Italy, honestly assert that among the mass of the Italian people there exists any unity of religious belief, or any real understanding of the dogmas and doctrines taught by the Church. The unity is external only; and to attempt to prove that among thirty-seven millions of Italians who are nominally Catholics more than a limited proportion could be found who not only believed but understood the dogmas of their supposed faith, would be to attempt to prove a theory which has no existence in fact.

At the same time, ridiculous indeed are those Protestant "missions" which believe that they can bring the sceptical Italian Catholic into the folds of Protestantism. Such a presumption displays on the face of it a complete ignorance of the Italian mind, and of the Latin attitude towards dogmatic faith. Let me hasten to add that the Anglican Church in Italy cannot be justly accused of any organised attempts of the kind; though individual members of it, generally of the female sex, are occasionally seized with the mania of convert-making. The Nonconformist bodies are the chief offenders. They have considerable wealth at their command, and in Rome especially they are very active in their attempts to make proselytes. It must be owned that their methods are of an extremely objectionable nature. At their conferences and in their churches abuse of the Roman Church and of the Roman Pontiff is carried to an extent altogether unpardonable, while the doctrines of Catholicism are so misrepresented as to be unrecognisable. What abuse will not effect is effected by bribery. Money is freely given in order to entice the Roman youth of both sexes to frequent Methodist conventicles, and so-called charities are instituted the real object of which is to compel the families assisted by them to attend services and lectures. I am afraid that the "converts" regard the whole affair as an excellent joke. They gladly profit by the folly of the *protestanti*, accept their money and their bibles, and most likely are careful to go to Mass before they repair to the Methodist churches to have their ears tickled by diatribes against the scarlet woman and that lady of Babylon who was no better than she should be.

An Italian loves a sermon, and so long as it is delivered with sufficient oratorical violence and a proper accompaniment of gesticulation, he is comparatively indifferent to the opinions that may be expressed in it. I regret to say that I know of an instance in which a preacher, famed for the energy of his movements in the pulpit, was the victim of a practical joke perpetrated by some extremely naughty boys of my acquaintance. Knowing that this priest was going to preach in their parish church, they took occasion previously to fix a number of tin tacks with the points uppermost round the ledge of the pulpit. By degrees the preacher warmed to his subject, and it was not long before he brought down both hands violently on the prepared spot, in order to emphasise a point in his discourse. It certainly was emphasised; I believe that "figli di cani" was quite the mildest of the expressions which brought the sermon to an abrupt close. This, however, is a digression.

It can scarcely be wondered at if the Vatican resents a state of things which permits foreign busybodies a licence of language and procedure which both honour and good taste, if nothing else, ought to render impossible. Moreover, if Protestants would but believe it, the Italians who abandon an official conformity with Catholicism are extremely unlikely to become genuine members of any other religious community. The Italian is far too shrewd to exchange one system of dogmatic belief for another; and if he troubles himself sufficiently about such matters as to reject dogma instead of contenting himself with ignoring it, he rejects it in all its forms and varieties. A very few, possessed of unusual education and a taste for theology, may perhaps make the exchange, but they are merely regarded as "cranks" by their neighbours, and their "conversion" carries with it no weight or influence upon their surroundings.

I am told that it is the custom among certain Methodist bodies to pay their ministers in accordance with the size of the congregations in the churches which these control. Whether this be the case I do not know; but, if it is, it sufficiently explains the barefaced bribery which is exercised in order to induce Italians of the poorer classes to attend the Methodist conventicles and lecture-rooms. That such bribery is largely practised I know by experience, for I have had servants and others in my employ who have been subjected to it. It is quite possible, of course, that these tactics to attract the Roman youth to their conventicles are pursued rather by fanatical members of their congregations than by the Methodist ministers themselves. But however this may be, nothing can excuse the vilification of the Roman Church and its dignitaries, and the gross caricatures of Roman Catholic doctrine, which form so principal a feature of the Protestant propaganda in Rome and other Italian cities.

No interference, however, on the part of the civil authorities with the vagaries of foreign religious sects could be anything but injurious to that complete liberty of thought and action in all matters of religious faith, which is not the least of the blessings which have resulted from the suppression of the temporal jurisdiction of the Papacy in Italy. It is only to be regretted that those foreign religious bodies, who so largely profit by this liberty, should so often abuse it in a wholly unworthy manner. But where, it must be confessed, it is a matter of surprise that the Italian Government does not interfere, is in the case of such flagrant outrages on all decency as are committed week after week by certain scurrilous publications which shelter themselves under the shield of the liberty of the Press. A journal such as *l'Asino*, for instance, which is edited by a deputy of parliament, is an offence against those feelings of respect for sacred things which are entertained by all decently minded people of all nationalities and creeds. It is nothing less than revolting to see such a publication as *l'Asino*, in which blasphemous caricatures representing the most sacred subjects figure in almost every number, exposed to view on the newspaper stalls and in shop windows. All respectable Italians, however much they may be opposed to the Vatican and to the Church, deplore these examples of ignorance and bad taste in their midst. These are surely cases in which interference on the part of the authorities would safeguard rather than injure the liberty of the Press, and any action which tended to recall to order and to a sense of decency such publications as that which I have named, would not only earn the sympathy of the vast majority of the Italian community at large, but would be welcomed by decently minded people of all nationalities and creeds who are naturally unable to understand why in Italy alone should publications so opposed to all ideas of refinement or good taste, and so offensive to the susceptibilities of all but the coarser-minded among the public, be tolerated.

The travesty of the most sacred subjects, however, is by no means due, as the clerical party would have it believed, to modern infidelity and to the propaganda of the Freemasons. It existed in Italy even in the Middle Ages. Indeed, the greater the observance of religious forms and ceremonies, the less would appear to have been the reverence for the persons and objects those forms and ceremonies were supposed to commemorate—and this, I think, is one of the many details in which it is impossible to judge the Latin frame of mind from an Anglo-Saxon standpoint. There is a considerable difference, however, between the often witty irreverences spoken or written, and the scurrilous illustrations parodying the most sacred mysteries of the Christian faith, which, to the astonishment even of those who do not profess that faith, disgrace the pages of certain Italian journals.

It is frequently said by foreigners that Italy is a country in which what is called public opinion is strangely lacking. In a sense this criticism is true; but it would be truer still to say that Italian public opinion is dormant through lack of suitable organs through which it could find expression. That it does not exist to the same extent as in countries which have been for centuries united is inevitable; but, all the same, it is slowly but surely in process of formation. Unfortunately, the Press, which in all countries is, or should be, the chief factor in the forming of a healthy public opinion, and the chief instrument of its expression and influence, has hitherto been rather an impediment than otherwise to its development. Of newspapers, daily and weekly, there are no end in Italy. Not only the cities, but almost all little country towns have their own journals, and the number of professional journalists and newspaper correspondents must form quite a considerable fraction of the Italian population. The greater number of these newspapers can only keep themselves alive with difficulty. Their capital, as a rule, is extremely small; and they are not, therefore, in a position to furnish their readers with much that is really useful or instructive. Local affairs and municipal politics are given far more prominence in their pages than more important questions affecting the interests of the nation at large; and these last are frequently dismissed in a few lines, while columns are devoted to sensational accounts of crimes, suicides, and love-affairs! Even the more authoritative organs of the capital and the great towns are apt to present what might be termed imperial questions from the point of view of some limited and perhaps ephemeral group in the Camera; and they, too, in common with their provincial colleagues, devote a large portion of their space to matters which might often, with advantage to the public, be suppressed, or dismissed in a few words. The consequence is that public opinion is deprived of its chief and most valuable instrument, and that it lacks, as I have already said, both guidance and channels of expression. The Italians of all classes are such keen readers of newspapers, that it seems strange that the Italian Press should not be more fully alive to the great opportunities and the lofty mission which is its inheritance.

As matters stand, it would be difficult to name any Italian journal which exercises a genuine or consistent influence on public opinion; and the public has become so accustomed to regarding its newspapers as representing merely the ideas and interests of this or that politician or group of politicians, that the value of articles bearing upon anything but trivial subjects is largely discounted. I should like to add that I am not advancing theories of my own on this subject, but merely repeating opinions which have been frequently expressed to me by Italians themselves. It may naturally be suggested, as a refutation of these opinions, that, in a country in which the parliamentary system obtains, public opinion possesses far more efficacious means of expression than those which could be afforded to it by the Press. Unluckily, however, no Italian would even pretend to admit that the Chamber of Deputies really represents the feelings and wishes of Italy. Before any such admission could be honestly made, the whole system of parliamentary elections would have to be revised, and certain well-known corruptions and abuses, into which it is not necessary to enter in these pages, eradicated. We know, in our own case, how much, or how little, our House of Commons really represents the best and most honest political opinions of the country ; and we, perhaps, may still pride ourselves on the reflection that our electoral system is the least tainted by Government interference or influence of any in the world, though recent and present events would seem scarcely to justify such a reflection. I have never yet met an Italian of any class who would not at once smile incredulously at the idea of the Camera being in any way representative of Italian public opinion, and certainly none regard the Press as in any way voicing it.

Massimo d'Azeglio's famous saying, "Ora cha è fatta Italia, bisogna fare gli Italiani," still, in a sense, holds good. The wide divergence of ideas, customs, and character naturally existing among a people for centuries under the domination of so many different forms of government, must obviously require more than the comparatively brief space of fifty years to be reduced to anything like uniformity. But this uniformity is steadily increasing, and with it, and with the spread of education among the lower classes, is gradually arising that spirit of public opinion which only needs a better organised and more disinterested Press to enable it to gather strength and influence.

The majority of English people elect to come to Rome at a season when they see little or nothing of the real life of the city. "Easter in Rome" is still a catch-phrase of the tourist agencies; and for the few who spend Christmas in the Eternal City there are thousands who flock to it for the Holy Week and Easter. Is is extraordinary how difficult it is to kill ancient traditions. Numberless foreigners, especially English and Americans, hasten to Rome at Easter-time under the impression that they will be able to assist at papal functions which have been discontinued for forty years. As a matter of fact, the churches of Rome during the Settimana Santa present a sorry enough spectacle, and by no means an edifying one.

The crowds of idle sightseers which throng the basilicas are attracted by no spirit of devotion, and the few who come to join in the religious ceremonies are hustled hither and thither by Anglo-Saxons and Teutons, who have no scruple in fighting their way to every possible coign of vantage. The Teutons, I think, usually have the best of it. When the German finds his progress in St. Peter's or the Lateran barred, he generally employs his elbows and feet to good purpose. The German women, too, have an altogether admirable method of clearing a path in front of them. Judicious digs of their hat-pins, which I have seen them conceal in their muffs for the purpose, compel even the most obstinate to move aside. I imagine that, except in Jerusalem at the same season, there is no city in which Christianity cuts so sorry a figure as it does in Rome at Eastertide.

Irreverence, however, is by no means confined to the foreign visitors—though one wonders why many of one's own compatriots, for instance, who would be horrified were a foreigner to behave in St. Paul's Cathedral as they themselves unblushingly do in St. Peter's, should so frequently make themselves conspicuous for a total disregard of the respect due to their surroundings.

I have sometimes been amused at the comments made by Englishwomen, who would cheerfully seat themselves on the balustrade surrounding the Confessional in St. Peter's and read aloud from their guide-books, or tramp about during the elevation of the Host, on the irreverence of the Romans. At least Roman irreverence is passive rather than active—tranquil rather than aggressive. As a matter of fact, the altogether unedifying attitude of a Roman crowd at a religious function—and it is an attitude often shared by the clergy themselves—is due not to irreverence, but to that carelessness and indifference begotten of intimacy with the scenes and ceremonials in progress.

It is not to the great basilicas that the devout Romans repair during the Settimana Santa, or at other great festivals of the Church—or rather, they repair to them as a kind of afterthought; their real devotions having been paid in churches in which the sublime offices of those days are not "shows," and therefore do not attract either the tourists or native sightseers. During the office of Tenebræ, and the subsequent exposition of the great relics in St. Peter's, for example, the whole of Rome walks up and down the vast basilica, and settles what it is going to do during the *feste* of Easter. Nobody pays any particular attention to the religious part of the performance, and if the murmur of voices, which sounds like that of the waves of the sea, be hushed for a few minutes during the chanting of the *Miserere*, this is only to enjoy, and immediately afterwards to criticise, the music and the singing.

Those who make a point of absenting themselves from Rome during the Holy Week and Easter are wise, and very many of the Romans betake themselves elsewhere during those days. Christmas, on the other hand, I, for one, would rather spend in Rome than in any other city in the world. So far as the ceremonies of the Church are concerned, these are, to my mind, far more impressive than the theatrical shows of the Holy Week, and they seem to strike a far more genuine note. Perhaps it is because the note of tragedy and the trappings of stereotyped woe are too exaggerated during the Settimana Santa that they fail to touch anything deeper than the imagination. Perhaps, too, one would feel more impressed were it possible to forget the fact that almost precisely similar scenes of grief and mourning, of joy and triumph, were enacted year after year in honour of deified men who lived and died, and rose again from the dead, centuries before the tragedy of Calvary. The student of the ancient rituals connected with Adonis-worship and the cult of Osiris—to name only two out of the many examples of God-men who were deliberately slain by proxy in order that they might be born again—is well aware how largely Christianity has borrowed from these rituals. He may, perhaps, not illogically consider that in the mournful ceremonies of the Settimana Santa and the exultant offices of the Pasqua di Risurrezione he is, after all, merely assisting at an evolved form of Nature-worship; and the relevancy of this consideration will not be diminished by the knowledge that he is in Rome, whither all the great cults of the East were transplanted and eventually absorbed by Latin Christianity. The said student, of course, would not have far to seek in order to discover the pagan prototype of Christmas. A Roman Christmas, however, is not accompanied by that enforced merriment which is considered in England to be appropriate to the season. Its joy, I think, is altogether more natural and spontaneous, while, from the purely spiritual point of view, the religious ceremonies in connection with it are far more impressive than the theatrical displays and the mock shows of mourning which attract foreigners to the churches during the Holy Week.

Unfortunately, some of the old customs associated with the Nativity have ceased to exist, and among them the particularly appropriate and pleasing one of the descent into Rome of shepherds from the mountains with their bagpipes. For centuries, on Christmas Eve, and, indeed, during the Christmas season, the *pifferari* played their pastoral melodies in honour of the Holy Child—and the soft notes of their shepherd pipes certainly seemed to bring the scene at Bethlehem more vividly to the imagination than any of our Northern carols. Unluckily, the shepherds come no longer, or, if they do, they leave their pipes behind them. They are fearful, perhaps, of being arrested by the modern *guardie communali* as a nuisance. Once or twice of late years I have heard them playing on Christmas Eve in some remote quarter of the city, or in the vicinity of Piazza Montanara, where the peasants from the Campagna and the Alban Hills are wont to congregate. I fear, however, that on these occasions the bagpipes were playing rather in honour of the wine-flask than in that of the Nativity. Nevertheless, one could pretend to forget the vicinity of the wine-shops, and the pastoral strains of the pipes carried the imagination back to those other shepherds watching over their flocks under the Syrian stars, and to the manger outside the little inn at Bethleham.

Christmas Eve is, of course, a strict fast-day; and even those who do not observe it as such, adhere to the tradition by eating fish instead of meat. The *cottìo,* as the Christmas fish-market is called, is a time-honoured institution dating from remote centuries. The market is open through the entire night preceding Christmas Eve, and huge quantities of fish are exposed for sale for consumption the following day. On Christmas Eve the *Presepî*, or holy cribs, in the various churches are visited by the same crowds who, on the Thursday in the Holy Week, visit the sepulchres; but the tourist element is almost entirely absent. Often the *Presepio* is most artistically arranged, and there is nothing of the theatrical and artificial note which makes the mock funeral ceremonies of the Settimana Santa so little edifying.

Rome, however, can scarcely vie with Naples in realistic representations of the birth of Christ. In Naples live figures, both human and animal, are grouped round the manger, and the cows and asses play their proper part. Occasionally it happens that the animals become restive, and then comic scenes are apt to occur. It is sometimes the custom in large farms and country houses to have the midnight Masses on Christmas night celebrated on a special altar near the *Presepio*. I have never myself had the good-fortune to be in Naples or its environs at Christmas-time; but a lady I know, who lives in Naples, once gave me an amusing account of her experiences on that night. She had been invited to be present at the midnight Masses in the *Presepio*, and her hosts and their guests were waiting to go down to the chapel, when servants rushed into the room in a great state of excitement. One of the cows had broken loose from the manger and, as they expressed it—"stava faccendo l'ira di Dio in cucina!" and indeed Mass could not be commenced until the exasperated cow had been prevailed upon to cease playing havoc in the adjoining kitchen.

In certain of the churches in Rome the three Masses in succession, celebrated immediately after midnight on Christmas Eve, are accompanied by beautiful music, notably in that of San Luigi dei Francesi—the special church of the French Catholics. In the little church of the Sudario—the church of the Piedmontese, which is much frequented by the royalties and the Court—the midnight Masses are the more impressive on account of their quiet simplicity, and here, of course, the merely curious do not penetrate. After midnight the fast of the vigil ends, and the restaurants are crowded with supper-parties, while in the private houses families assemble and make merry over Christmas fare. It is at the Epiphany, however, that the children have their "good time."

In Italy the Befana takes the place of Father Christmas and Santa Claus. Stockings and other receptacles are hung by the bedside on the eve of the Epiphany, to be filled with presents and toys by the Befana, a witch-like old woman who is supposed to bring to all good children—and to many naughty ones also—delightful and longed-for gifts, and great is the excitement when the little ones wake up and examine their shoes and stockings to see what the Befana has brought them during the night. The Christmas-tree, too, is becoming a popular institution in the Italian cities, though of course it is an exotic, as, indeed, it is in our own country, since it was not, I think, heard of in England before early Victorian times, when it was introduced by the Prince Consort from Germany. The Befana is undoubtedly the presiding genius of an Italian Christmas, and a very human, kindly, and good-natured old lady she is; indeed, the whole spirit of an Italian Christmas, from its very simplicity and kindliness, and the absence from it of artificial joy, forced merriment, and sentimentality, is far more sympathetic, and at the same time far more poetical, than that coarser and more material one which reigns in England at the same season, and which, no doubt, we English owe largely to Germany and to Charles Dickens. It is also, I cannot help thinking, a far more truly religious one, and it seems to touch chords in the hearts of even the roughest and most ignorant of the population in a way which the mock mourning of the Settimana Santa and the theological mystery of the Resurrection entirely fail to do. The first are regarded as pure ceremonials by the average Italian, the second as commemorative of a supernatural event as to the truth of which he has very grave doubts, even if he do not reject it (which he frequently does) as a tale of the priests.

But childbirth and motherhood are natural, human events which appeal to all humanity, and in Italy the love for children is carried to an extent which, it must be confessed, is often injurious to the characters of its objects, especially among the lower orders. The Italian child is very often roughly spoilt in early childhood, and so great is the natural tenderness of Italians for children that instead of ruling them, they are apt to be ruled by them. Unfortunately, this excess of tenderness is injurious not only to the characters, but also to the health of the little people. It is too common a sight in Italy to see young children being dragged about the streets, or taken to places of amusement at hours of the night when they ought to be sound asleep in bed. This practice, and an astonishing carelessness as to diet, undoubtedly accounts for the extraordinary prevalence of anæmia among Italian children. Among the upper classes, of course, the children are more sensibly brought up, and, indeed, they frequently receive a far better and more useful education than is the case in England. The chief offenders are the middle and lower classes. The children of these are too often ruined by over-kindness. Discipline and obedience are things rarely imposed; and the result, in later years, is unruly "students" and discontented members of society. Fortunately, in the case of the majority of the boys, military service steps in at a critical moment of their lives, and they find themselves compelled to recognise some other master than their own will and caprices.

It is not for English people, however, to criticise the Italian methods of dealing with children. I well remember the incredulity, that turned to horror-stricken amazement when I had sadly to admit that such a Society not only existed in England, but was a very necessary and valuable institution,—with which some Italian friends learned of the existence of an English Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Nevertheless, a very horrible form of cruelty to children does exist in certain parts of Italy, and, strangely enough, English people are largely responsible for its existence. If only the foreigner in Italy would inexorably refuse to give in the streets or the churches in certain cities to the deformed or mutilated, he would be assisting in stamping out a terrible evil. It is a well-known fact that in places in which tourists abound children are wilfully mutilated in order that they may appeal to the sympathies of the passers-by, and in after life become successful professional beggars. The individual who thrusts a mutilated stump or a deformed limb in one's face is happily becoming rarer every year, thanks to the energy of the police. That he pursues his trade at all, or that unfortunate children are still sacrificed to provide him with successors, is entirely due to the folly, to call it by no stronger term, of those who give money to him, and to the indifference of the priests who, instead of aiding the Italian authorities in their efforts to stamp out professional mendicancy, encourage it by permitting every kind of impostor to ply his or her trade in and around the churches.

The New Year ushers in the Carnival season—though the true Carnival, of course, is confined to the few days immediately preceding the commencement of Lent. Throughout Italy, however, the Carnival is a moribund institution; and no one, save the dregs of the population, appears to regret its gradual disappearance. Spasmodic efforts are made to revive it—but they meet with scant encouragement. The fact is, that the modern Italians are a far graver and more seriously minded people than their ancestors were. The problems of life have become more pressing, and the old, traditional idea that Italians are a race which takes no thought for to-morrow and is content to bask in the sunshine is an entirely erroneous one so far as its present representatives are concerned. The only difference which Lent makes in the social life in Rome or other Italian cities is that marriages are not celebrated during it, and dancing, at all events among the upper classes, is tabooed. In Roman society the forty days' fast resolves itself, in point of fact, into thirty-seven days, on which one may dine out every evening; and if dancing is considered to be an irreligious act, eating is certainly not so! Excepting on the four last days of the Settimana Santa, there is no cessation in the round of luncheon and dinner-parties, and of evening entertainments of all kinds save *feste da ballo.*

As the spring advances, expeditions into the country become the fashion in the smart world. But it is not necessary to be "smart" in order to enjoy the lovely country which surrounds Rome on all sides. The uninitiated are usually content with excursions among the Castelli Romani—as the primitive little towns perched upon the Alban Hills are called. They are picturesque enough, certainly, but their population, the reverse of pleasing in disposition and manners, has been also greatly corrupted by tourists and the close proximity of the capital. The beautiful villas, too, until recently the property of Roman princes, have many of them been sold, and are now used as resorts in which the students of the various clerical colleges in Rome pass the summer and early autumn months.

As everybody, I suppose, is aware, almost every nation, England and America included, has its national seminary or training college for priests in Rome. It by no means follows, however, that all the young men who study at these colleges eventually become priests. The large majority, no doubt, do so, but a certain number, after going through a course of study, return to the world and embrace other professions. My acquaintance with seminarists in Rome, I confess, has been chiefly among these last; and it is for this reason that I refrain from attempting to describe the life in these institutions, since to quote the impressions of those who found themselves unable to conform to its conditions might be unfair. The seminaries of Rome form a world of their own; and perhaps it may not be unjust to say that unless a young fellow be content to sacrifice his reason to his faith he is scarcely likely, if he be endowed with honesty as well as intellect, to go through his years as a seminarist without being exposed to considerable mental misgivings and searchings of heart.

What, I believe, is not so generally known is the fact that since the fall of the Papal Government the number of monastic establishments and religious "congregations" has increased in Rome to an extent which would have been impossible when the city was under the temporal sovereignty of the Popes. The Papal Government very wisely placed very severe restrictions on the number of such institutions, and a jealous watch was kept that monastic and conventual establishments did not acquire any undue amount of property within the walls of Rome, or, indeed, of any other city in the States of the Church. The Vatican, while ever eager to support and encourage such establishments elsewhere, was always much too shrewd to allow the religious orders to become too rich or too powerful in the Eternal City.

Fearful of any action which should be supposed to be prompted by intolerance, the Italian Government has allowed the laws regulating the property of the religious orders to become practically a dead letter. At the present time many of the most valuable buildings and sites in Rome are in the hands of monastic bodies, while the religious orders may be said to represent a very large proportion of Italian capitalism. As was the case in France, many of the convents are little else than trading establishments carried on under the mask of religion. Shops and even hotels are "floated" by wealthy "congregations," and there can be little doubt that in the perhaps not distant future the Italian Government will find itself compelled to meet the problems which similar "religious" abuses recently created in France. The question is a thorny one, for it would be doubtless nothing short of an unwarrantable interference with the liberty of the subject to deny to any body of persons the right to live in community. But any one acquainted with the real nature and scope of a large proportion of monastic and conventual establishments of all creeds may well reflect whether the law of every State should not render it impossible for these establishments to acquire more than a restricted amount of property; whether they should not be open to proper Government inspection; and whether it should not be made illegal for them to compete in any way in trade. To describe any such measures as intolerant or irreligious is absurd. No one will deny the inestimable services to sick and suffering humanity which have been and are rendered by many communities of monks and nuns; but nobody, again, can truthfully deny that these communities are in the minority compared with others which are in reality merely political, financial, or trading communities posing as religious institutions.

CHAPTER IX

THE PONTINE MARSHES

OF all the months in an Italian year, May, June, and October are certainly the most delightful—and in May and June, Rome and the districts surrounding it are seen at their very best. The heat is never excessive, so long as the *scirocco* does not blow; but when that accursed wind does blow, it brings with it a feeling of limpness and lassitude, and its effect on the nerves and temper are apt to be disturbing. Fortunately, there is far less *scirocco* in the spring and summer months than in autumn and winter. The Italian sun hurts nobody—even in the dog-days; it is when the sun does not shine and the sky is leaden-coloured, when the hot wind from the African deserts sweeps over the country and fills the eyes and the nose and every little pore of the skin with dust, that one longs for the fresh breezes of the north. I have often noticed that foreigners are not particularly affected by the *scirocco* until they have been several years in Italy, and they can scarcely understand the influence it has upon Italians and upon those who have lived long in the country. The Italian, indeed, suffers greatly from the heat, whereas he can, as a rule, stand any amount of cold, and hardly appears to feel it. The heat of English houses, for instance, makes many of my Italian friends positively ill—and I must confess that I have learned to share their dislike of artificially heated rooms and stuffy houses. Not a little of my time in English houses is spent in surreptitiously opening windows, when I think I shall not be found out, and in letting a little pure air penetrate into places where it seems to me to be badly needed.

English and Americans find Italian houses bitterly cold until they have become used to them; and, indeed, the comparative rarity of open fireplaces in the more modern dwellings cannot be said to be compensated by the warmth of the winter sun. The sun, moreover, does not always shine in Italy; and this is a point which the modern Italian house-builder does not seem able to grasp. In old days the Italians would seem to have appreciated the comfort of fires, if one may judge by the huge open fireplaces to be found in the palaces and villas built in the Middle Ages. But it is certainly a remarkable thing that even houses built at the present time are, as a rule, unprovided with flues and hearths in the living-rooms. Objections to this want are usually met by the excuse—"Ma-non c'è mai bisogno di caminetti! C'è il sole,"—and it is in vain to attempt to argue that in winter there are many grey and bitter days on which the sun is invisible, and that even on fine days it has a habit of setting. The Italian proverb—"Dove non entra il sole, entra il medico"—is a very true one; but it is equally true that the doctor would enter less frequently were Italian dwellings constructed more in conformity with the exigencies of a climate which is a "good winter climate" only in the imagination of foreign physicians anxious to get rid of troublesome patients.

I am afraid that the real reason for the absence, or rarity, of any means of supplementing the capricious action of the sun is to be looked for in the costliness of fuel in Italy. It is only the rich who can afford to keep other fires going in their establishments save that which cooks the family meals. The miserable apology for coal which is sold in Italy costs exactly four times as much per ton as the very best and most expensive English or Belgian coal; while wood, owing to the wholesale destruction of trees in the past, and the complete ignorance which, until recent times, reigned throughout Italy regarding forestry, is rapidly becoming almost as costly an article. The humble family which makes a sitting-room of its kitchen on winter days and evenings indisputably enjoys more comfort than many of the *signoria* who sit in their apartments round a brazier, in which are glowing some lumps of charcoal or some wood ashes. I suppose, however, that it is all a matter of habit. But I must admit that, personally, I far prefer the cold Italian room to the overheated atmosphere of the average English house—and that the modern hotels, with their *calorifères* and other pestilential appliances for the promotion of stuffiness, are purgatory to me. There is, however, a middle course in house-warming, as in everything else, and I confess that what I will call the sun argument of the Italians in this matter is a singularly illogical argument, framed, as I have suggested, to conceal another far more practical one.

Another reason, no doubt, which makes the majority of Italian dwellings fall considerably short of the standard of English home comfort is due to the fact that Italian housewives do not receive much encouragement from their husbands and sons in making their homes attractive. In towns and villages alike it is the custom to repair to the *caffè* immediately after the evening meal, and in little country villages which cannot boast of a *caffè* the *appalto*, or tobacconist's shop, usually supplies the meeting-place whither the male members of the community betake themselves to smoke and gossip over a glass of wine. Nevertheless, it is a great mistake to assume that the idea of home is altogether absent from Italian life, an assertion which I have frequently met with in books concerning Italy. I believe that there is more genuine attachment to family life among Italians of all classes than is to be found among the English, though there may be less attachment or sentiment concerning the home itself. That family affection is far deeper among Italians than it is with us is indisputable. Family interests, too, are, as a rule, united, and not, as is so often the case in England, divided, or, perhaps, actually antagonistic.

I feel confident that readers of this book will say that it is full of digressions—and they will be perfectly right in their criticism. But the country, and the people about whom I am writing, are also full of digressions. Italian life is not ordered like that in Germany or England, and in Italy the expected rarely comes to pass. The great thing is not to expect too much—and then one will often be most agreeably surprised.

In these days of motor-cars countless districts, until recently only accessible at the cost of much time, inconvenience, and discomfort, are now easily visited by those who can afford this mode of travelling. It is certainly pleasant to be independent of railways, especially of Italian railways, and to be able so to plan one's expeditions as to arrive by nightfall at one of the larger towns which offer decent accommodation in the way of inns. But there is much to be said, too, in favour of the out-of-date horse, more particularly if the object of such expeditions is to explore not only the highways, but also the byways of Italy. Especially is this the case in the country around and south of Rome. Nowadays people think nothing of motoring from Rome to Naples, and no doubt it is satisfactory to know that, barring accidents, one will pass the night in comfort in a Naples hotel instead of in supreme discomfort in the "hotel" of such a place, for instance, as Terracina.

If time is no object, I would choose a couple of strong Maremma ponies and a light "machine," as the Scots would call it, with a hood to it in preference to any motor-car. As to the discomforts attendant on passing the nights at the inns of small country towns, these, mercifully, are of a transitory nature. I admit that they are sometimes disagreeable enough while they last; but when morning comes they are speedily forgotten, and, as a rule, the goodwill of one's hosts—even if it be limited by force of circumstances to words rather than deeds—makes one ready to put up with the roughest of fare and the most primitive of sleeping and other accommodation. It is the fashion to say that one is so independent when touring in a motor-car; but it always seems to me that in reality one is nothing of the kind. At any moment one is liable to have one's utter dependency insisted upon in the most humiliating way, even to following the car on foot while it is being dragged ignominiously along a dusty road to the nearest *paese* by a couple of oxen provided from some neighbouring *fattoria.* With ordinary forethought and humanity, nothing is likely to go wrong with a couple of sturdy Maremma horses. They will do their fifty and sixty miles in a day—and more than this—with the greatest ease if properly driven and cared for. And how pleasant it is to be able to turn down any attractive-looking lane, or to stop to explore some ancient villa, or visit some farm, without any anxious feelings as to the effect of rough tracks and bypaths on tyres or machinery!

To any one interested in the animal and plant life of the country, there can be no doubt as to the advantages of sitting behind horses rather than in a motor. Countless objects of interest must necessarily escape one's attention when speeding through the country at a rate of thirty or forty miles an hour. Moreover, wild creatures of all kinds are far more shy of motor-cars in Italy than they are in England or Scotland. I have often motored through deer forests in Scotland and have been astonished at the unconcern of the deer, who will sometimes remain quietly feeding within fifty yards of the road on which one is travelling. In the wilder parts of Italy, however, such as the Maremma or the Pontine Marshes, a motor has the effect of rendering both animals and birds invisible, except the cattle and buffalo, who doubtless are quite aware that if they chose they could bring disaster on any car. I have repeatedly motored through both of these enchanting districts with companions who have looked incredulous when I have assured them that the woods, plains, and lagoons they were passing teemed with animal life; and I have driven through these same districts, or ridden through them, and my eyes have ached at the end of the day from watching the wild life that the more familiar sound of horses' hoofs has not scared into temporary hiding.

As I have said before, the uninitiated and the fashionable are content to spend a spring or early summer day on an excursion into the Alban Hills and on doing the round of the Castelli Romani. It is all charming, certainly; but those who are sensible enough to go farther afield and to penetrate into the inner mysteries of the Pontine Marshes and the beautiful passes and hill towns among the Volscian Mountains in the months of May and June will enjoy experiences which, I think, they will never forget, especially if they be lovers of Nature, and have some understanding of the creatures, animal and vegetable, that frequent her more remote haunts. The general idea concerning the Pontine Marshes is that they are dreary expanses of swamps and waste lands ravaged by malaria, and few people have any conception of their extraordinary fascination during certain seasons of the year. Swamps and waste land there certainly are in abundance; and the problem of draining this vast district, which baffled Roman emperors, is still far from being entirely solved, though large tracts have been reclaimed and now yield valuable crops of grass and corn. The lover of Nature in her wilder moods will secretly rejoice that in the Pontine Marshes she has been only partially vanquished by the utilitarian spirit of mankind.

To make a three or four days' driving-tour in a light *baroccino* through the Pontine Marshes any time from the beginning of May till the end of June is one of the most delightful experiences that can fall to any one's lot in Italy. The old Volscian city of Velletri, situated on the last spur of the Alban Hills, forms a picturesque gateway to the Paludi Pontini, and from hence one descends by a good road to the plain. The town well repays a few hours spent in wandering about it, though for discomfort and dirt it would be hard to beat its principal hotel. It is full of interesting buildings, such as the old papal palace built by Giacomo della Porta, which occupies the site of the ancient Volscian citadel, and is now the Municipio, and the magnificent but gloomy and ill-cared-for Palazzo Lancellotti, now called Palazzo Gianetti and belonging to the prince of that name. Passing through its grim portals one finds oneself in an open gallery resembling the interior of some vast cathedral, from which a marble staircase winds up to the top of the building. On each landing of this staircase is a loggia, from which are to be seen most lovely views in all directions. The Velletrani are an extremely handsome race—but the beauty in both sexes is usually of a sullen and repellent type; and, indeed, they have always born an evil reputation, formerly for acts of brigandage and now for crimes of violence for which the potent Velletri wines are no doubt largely responsible.

"Velletrani sette volte villani" is an old Latian proverb which, unfortunately, appears to be still applicable to the population of Velletri if one may judge from the opinion of the Carabinieri quartered in the city, though personally I have never met with anything but courtesy and kindness during my visits to the place. After leaving Velletri one soon finds oneself in the immense domain of the Caetani family, which stretches for well-nigh a hundred miles of country. To enumerate the immense number of fiefs possessed in the past and present by this splendid House would be hopeless. Its principalities, duchies, and lordships were in remote ages united into an absolute sovereignty, and the Caetani owe their family name to Caieta. While much of this ancient domain has passed into other hands in the course of the centuries, much remains; and the dukedom of Sermoneta, borne by the present well-known head of the Caetani, represents a domain unequalled in extent, variety, and historical association and tradition by anything in the British Isles. It is pleasant to think, as one drives through this territory, that its owners are fully worthy of the great position they hold. Unlike many Italian magnates, the Caetani do not abandon their properties and regard them merely as sources from which to draw funds to be spent in Rome or in foreign capitals.

The Duke and Duchess of Sermoneta reside constantly at one or another of the palaces and castles on their estates, and the magnificent old feudal castle of Sermoneta, from which they take their principal title, has been of recent years restored, and it is here and at their shooting-place at Fogliano on the seacoast where they spend most of their time when they are not in the Caetani palace in Rome. The duchess, of course, was an Englishwoman by birth, as were the mothers or wives of Prince Borghese, Prince Doria, and several other heads of great Roman houses. Her name is one to conjure by among the population of the Pontine Marshes and the hill villages and towns in the neighbourhood of Sermoneta. To her and to the duke's initiative and interest in the people and their needs are due countless useful works, the effects of which one may see as one traverses their domains. The sick and the fever-stricken are cared for and supplied with remedies and drugs which they would have to travel miles to obtain were it not for the thoughtfulness of the owners of the soil. Among her other country pursuits, the Duchess di Sermoneta maintains a large horse-breeding establishment, and great numbers of her horses are bought by the Government for the cavalry regiments.

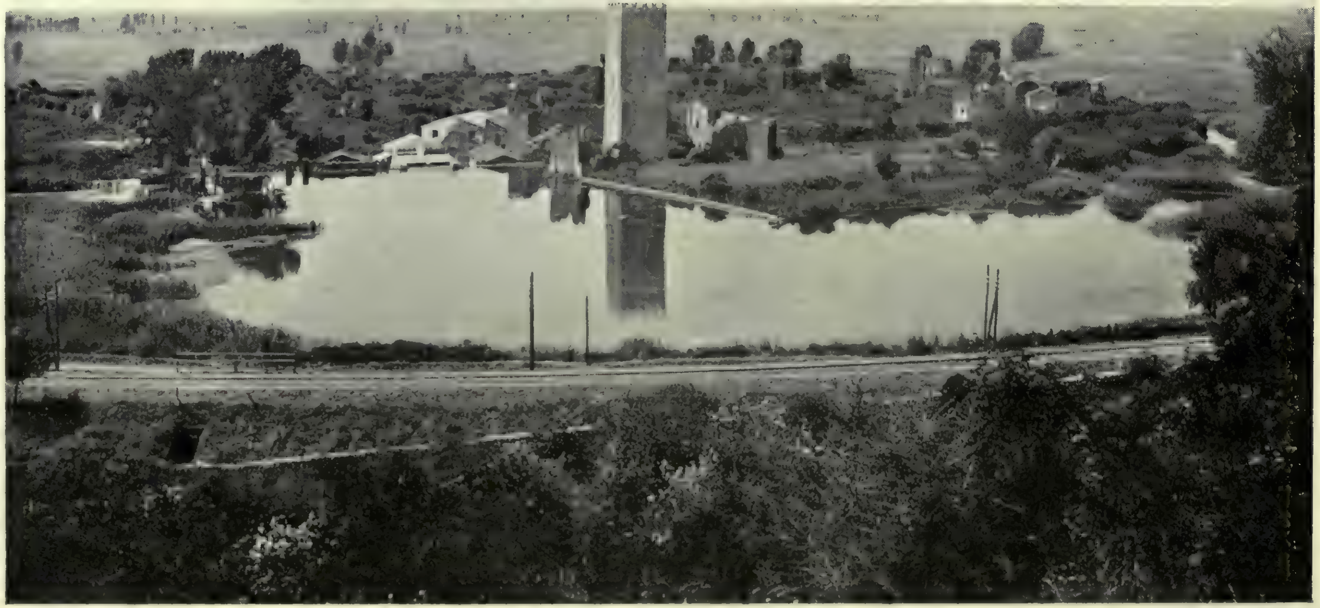
At Cisterna, a little *paese* some miles below Velletri, on the borders of the Marshes, is another of the Caetani palaces—a vast, picturesque building which is no longer used as a residence, since Sermoneta itself is only a few miles distant.

Cisterna itself is famous as being the site of the Three Taverns mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. As to Sermoneta, its history goes back to early in the twelfth century, and in 1297 it was already Caetani property. The Borgia confiscated the Caetani possessions in 1500, and Sermoneta was created a dukedom by Alexander VI. and bestowed on his own family. His successor, however, Julius II., restored the Caetani to all their honours, and until well into the nineteenth century they exercised entire feudal authority, including the power of life and death over their people.

One of the most fascinating spots in the whole of the Pontine district is the deserted little town of Ninfa, some eight miles or so from Cisterna. What were once dwellings are now ruins completely buried not by mounds of earth, but under masses of roses and flowering creepers—honeysuckle, jasmine, vines run riot, and every variety of wild flowers. A placid pool reflects on its surface the ruins of a medieval tower, the remains of a Caetani fortress of the thirteenth century, under which nestles an ancient water-mill still in use. The little river Nymfeo, from which the village took its name, crystal-clear, wanders through the tangled greenery, and in the spring a chorus of nightingales and other singing-birds resounds in every direction. One may hear it in the distance long before one reaches the place. Gorgeous butterflies hover over the abandoned houses, from the casements of which hang festoons of wild roses and "traveller's joy." In the centre of the *paese* rises a deserted church, originally built, I believe, by Pope Gregory IX.

about the year 1200. Clematis and wall-flowers, myrtle and the sweet-scented bay cover its walls and roof, with here and there great clumps of red and white lilies and yellow broom. There are other churches too, their aisles ivy-hung—a safe retreat for the owls and bats, and a nesting-place for the innumerable birds. It is as well to walk cautiously; otherwise in the dim green light cast by the sunshine struggling through the masses of foliage and flowers obstructing the doors and windows one may rouse the ire of some hidden swarm of bees, and be obliged to beat a hasty and undignified retreat. Oberon and Titania, or their equivalent Italian fairy majesties, should surely hold their court in Ninfa—by day. But by night Ninfa is no place for revels, fairy or otherwise. When the sun goes down the fever-spirits steal from their haunts among the flowers, and none who value their health would risk the consequences of wandering about its deserted streets when the evening mists begin to rise. Indeed, all the beauty which we see is due to the victory of malaria over man. Its ravages were so inexorable that the little town was long ago deserted by the inhabitants, and the loveliness of Ninfa is the fortunate result of this desertion.

On the last occasion that I visited the place it was on a glorious day towards the end of May. A Tuscan friend of mine was my companion, and we had resolved to drive ourselves about the Pontine Marshes and the Volscian hill-towns for an entire week—making no plans, and leaving the problem of where and how we were to pass the nights to chance. Our ponies we had put up in an outhouse at the water-mill, and we spent the whole of the summer day in wandering about the fairy village; though I admit that several of the hottest hours, after we had eaten the food we had brought with us, were passed in sleeping to the soothing accompaniment of the murmur of the stream and the hum of the insects among the flowers. As evening approached we felt more than ever disinclined to leave the place. The colours cast by the setting sun on the silent pool and the ruins grew ever more superb, and the song of the birds ever more joyous. Prudence counselled immediate departure, and we accepted her counsels so far as to pay a visit to the ponies with the intention of harnessing them for the return journey to Norma, where we contemplated passing the night. At the mill the miller and his men were already preparing to leave, and they, too, advised our speedy departure. But the ever-increasing beauty and fascination of Ninfa at the close of a summer day, and the longing to remain to see the effects of a nearly full moon which was already showing itself above the mountains, proved too great a temptation. The miller shrugged his shoulders, and I think I caught the word *pazzi* muttered under his breath. Then he and his companions departed, pacified by our assurance that we would only remain half an hour longer, and would then put the ponies to and depart ourselves. That half-hour prolonged itself into nearly two hours before we could tear ourselves away. I do not think that either of us would have been the least surprised to find ourselves surrounded by nymphs and fauns, by elves and fairies. There was something alto-



Photo] [*Brogi.*

NINFA.

gether unearthly in the loveliness all around us. The warm, still air was heavy with the scent of flowers, and ringing with the notes of the nightingales, the plaintive cry of owls, and the bell-like sounds made by the green frogs; while the light of the moon enveloped the whole scene in a silver, shimmering haze even more beautiful, because more mysterious, than the pageantry by which we had been surrounded throughout the day.

Whether it was really a touch of the fever for which Ninfa has earned so unenviable a notoriety, I cannot say; but I believe that the violent headache and shivering fit which quite suddenly seized me on the drive to Norma was due rather to a slight *coup de soleil* contracted earlier in the day than to malaria. That I had a considerable "temperature" was evident, and by the time we arrived at the little inn where we had determined to sleep I felt as though the mill-wheel at Ninfa were revolving in my head, and my hands shook so much that I had quite a difficulty in undressing and tumbling into a perfectly clean though very hard bed. I am certain that I owed it to the wife of our host that I was perfectly able to continue our expedition the next day. No sooner had she realised the fact that I had *la febbre* than she placed a "priest" in my bed and proceeded to pile wadded coverlets on the top of me. I hasten to explain that the "priest" was not of flesh and blood, but a kind of wicker cage, in the centre of which hung an earthenware jar full of hot ashes. Then she disappeared for a space, presently to return with a jorum of a peculiarly nauseous concoction infused from herbs, and she stood over me until I had drunk every drop of the almost scalding liquid. This dose was repeated at intervals, until I felt as though I were undergoing the water torture inflicted in the days of the Roi Soleil. Expostulation was useless, and I do not know how many quarts of the abominable liquid, which seemed to me to resemble very strong camomile tea which had been kept until it had gone sour, the good lady insisted upon my swallowing. The ultimate result, however, was supremely satisfactory; for the next morning I awoke with the headache and shivering completely vanished, and only a general feeling of lassitude and shakiness, which wore off in the course of the day.

Very beautiful are the views over the Pontine Marshes and the Mediterranean from Norma, Cori, and the neighbouring mountain towns and villages. Terracina and Monte Circello, or Circeo, were our destinations after leaving these Volscian towns; but on the way, and far from any human habitation, one of the ponies cast a shoe, and immediately afterwards lamed itself by a large thorn running into its foot. For several miles we had to proceed very slowly, and it soon became clear that it would be impossible to reach Terracina in time for a midday meal, as we had hoped to do. At length we espied a *fattoria* lying among woods at some distance from the cross-country road on which we were travelling. It was one of the numerous *fattoria* on the Duca di Sermoneta's estates, and we made for it, confident that we should find somebody competent to doctor and reshoe the lame pony. On our way we met the *fattore* himself, mounted on a fine, powerful black stallion—and very picturesque and handsome he looked. He was one of the numerous subagents in the employ of the Caetani family, and on hearing of our mishap immediately offered us shelter and assistance, and accompanied us to his house.

As soon as he learned that I was acquainted with his *padroni* he was unremitting in his care and attention, and we were compelled to trespass on his hospitality for some hours, as it was found not to be advisable to reshoe the pony until the slight inflammation caused by the thorn had subsided. He and his wife insisted on providing us with food, but nothing would induce them to allow us to eat it in their kitchen, which we proposed doing. Mysterious confabulations passed between them, and eventually we were escorted upstairs and into our hosts' bedroom, where we found luncheon spread for us—on the matrimonial bed. A large dish of ham and *salame* occupied the centre of the quilted counterpane, flanked by cheese, hard-boiled eggs, a flask of excellent wine, and wild strawberries piled on cool vine leaves. My friend sat on the single chair the room contained, while I sat on the bed, our hospitable entertainers coming in every now and then to assure themselves that we lacked for nothing. As my friend knew no English, and we therefore always conversed in Italian, they were greatly astonished when they heard that I was an Englishman, and were full of curiosity to know what could have brought me into the wilds of the Pontine Marshes, and still more so when I told them that the whole district was one which had great fascination for me, and that it was by no means the first time I had driven or ridden through its more unfrequented parts.

Late that afternoon we got to Terracina, putting up ourselves and our ponies at that most undesirable hostelry, which, perhaps ironically, calls itself the Grand Hôtel di Terracina. I do not know why I should describe places like Terracina. They are now visited by motorists hurrying from Rome to Naples. But it is one thing, as I have already pointed out, to dash through them in a motor-car, and quite another to linger among them and devote the long summer days and glorious summer nights to absorbing their endless charm and beauties. After all, if people want to read about the delights of Terracina, they can, if they are classical scholars, turn to their Horace, Ovid, and other Latin poets, not forgetting that these always referred to the city under its ancient name of Anxur, though in their day it already possessed the Latin name of Terracina. The modern Terracina is remarkable only for its beautiful situation, and for the lovely views to be obtained from the ruins of King Theodoric's citadel, which towers above the town. From here the eye can sweep the whole of the Latian coast, and the greater portion of that of Campania, down to the faint, blue outline of Vesuvius with its wisp of smoke trailing on the horizon. It is a panorama of bays and of islands set in a sapphire sea; while the foreground is rich with the semi-tropical vegetation that has succeeded the lush, green fertility of the Paludi Pontini. Red cliffs, cactus-covered, overhang the town, and seem as if about to fall upon it; and everywhere are pomegranate trees with their scarlet blossom or golden fruit, huge silvery olives, stone pines, gigantic aloes, and the Indian fig.

In the early spring, too, the whole country is rose-white and fragrant with the blossom in the orchards. Then there is the perpetual harvest of the sea, as well as that of the land. Tunny-fishing is one of the great industries of the coast in these districts. I have never myself witnessed a capture of these great fish, nor have I any desire to do so, keen fisherman as I have always been. From all accounts it is a spectacle savouring too much of the shambles; and to see the blue waters round the nets changed into a seething sea of blood I should imagine to be an altogether disgusting exhibition. A quantity of the tunny had been signalled as having arrived in the bay when I was last at Terracina, and my Tuscan companion and I were invited to assist at the netting. However, neither of us felt anything but repulsion at the idea of witnessing a scene which was described as being *molto emozionante*, and we gave the shore a wide berth that day.

No one should be in these parts and fail to make at least one excursion to Monte Circeo, or Circello, as it is often called. From every point among the Pontine Marshes or the Volscian mountains one may see the blue mass of the promontory where Circe dwelt rising above the flat coast-line. The hill is almost an island, and, indeed, it must have been an island in prehistoric times. The little town of San Felice is the medieval successor to the ancient Circeii, and in the twelfth century the place passed into the hands of the Caetani, who eventually sold it to its actual possessors, the Ruspoli family. It needs but little imagination to feel as though the witchery of Circe still enthralled the lovely cape. The village of San Felice is uninteresting enough, but the hill above it abounds in beauty and in legendary associations and traditions. Some vast ruins are naturally declared to be the remains of Circe's palace, in which Ulysses fell under the magic spells of the lovely enchantress, and his comrades were changed from two-legged into four-legged animals through drinking her potions. I am quite aware that the classical scholar sniffs at the whole business, and that he quite logically finds no very reasonable grounds for the assumption that Homer ever intended to fix the witch's abode on this Latian promontory. Personally, however, I prefer to remain in my unscholarly ignorance, and to accept all the legends of the Monte Circeo as genuine. Somebody has bewitched the spot, and whether this somebody were Circe or another does not matter very much when one finds oneself under the spell of its extraordinary and almost uncanny beauty. Weird legends and stories are, very naturally, to be found among the folklore of the Circean mount and its neighbourhood. The whole promontory is singularly rich in wild flowers and herbs, while the almost perpendicular cliffs on the seaward side of it, from the summit of which a magnificent view extends to the Tuscan Maremma far to the northward, and to Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples to the south.

The peasants on Monte Circeo speak of a

mysterious herb, a decoction from which causes the drinker to become insane and to change into a wild beast in all but his bodily form. Whether such a herb exists, I know not; but it is extremely probable that among the strange and rare plants growing on the mountain that may be one which would have the effect of producing some frenzied form of madness. Perhaps the legendary cup of Circe may have its origin in some such plant. My own experience convinces me that in all countries, and especially, perhaps, in Italy, ancient legends and traditions, however strange and improbable, have invariably some foundation in fact; though often enough the distorted legend alone survives, while the fact to which it owes its rise may only be discoverable by the merest chance.

Among their other attractions, the cliffs of Monte Circeo are more frequented by sea-birds of infinite variety than any spot on the European coasts of the Mediterranean with which I am acquainted. The sea-fowl, however, are more plentiful in winter than in the spring or summer months, and do not, I think, nest here, but are chiefly migratory, and make the Circean rocks their haunts until the time comes for them to resort to their breeding-places in more northern climes. Throughout the Pontine Marshes the shooting in winter is excellent. Most species of wild duck are to be found, often in great quantities; while the little bustard, bittern, ruffs and reeves, and many other marsh-haunting birds, practically extinct, alas, in England, are common enough.

A curious mode of shooting wild-fowl, and particularly coots, of which there are vast numbers, obtains in this district, and notably at Fogliano, the shooting-box of the Duca di Sermoneta. The guns are placed in tubs submerged nearly up to their rims in open spaces in the lagoons. The immense forests of reeds and canes surrounding these tracts of water are then beaten through, and the duck and coot come in swarms over the heads of the guns. Not only do they afford very sporting shots, but there is an added excitement and difficulty in the fact that any incautious movement on the part of the shooter in his tub is apt to end in his overbalancing himself and falling ignominiously into the water.

Besides the wild-fowl, there are deer, boar, and other animals frequenting the vast tracts of *macchia*; while the herds of buffalo and horses give an altogether un-European aspect to the scene. As to the buffalo, it is as well to give them a wide berth, unless one happens to be accompanied by one or two *butteri* accustomed to deal with them. These *butteri* are splendid horsemen, and can sit the wildest and most vicious horse with apparently the greatest of ease. With their long lances and swift, wiry horses they will "round up" the most savage buffalo or cattle. The beasts instinctively know them, and will suffer themselves to be managed by them; whereas a stranger approaching the herd, or, still worse, approaching some solitary cow with her calf, would run the risk of being charged, and very likely run down and trampled to death.

I recollect some years ago when "Buffalo Bill" brought his "show" to Rome, that the feats of his

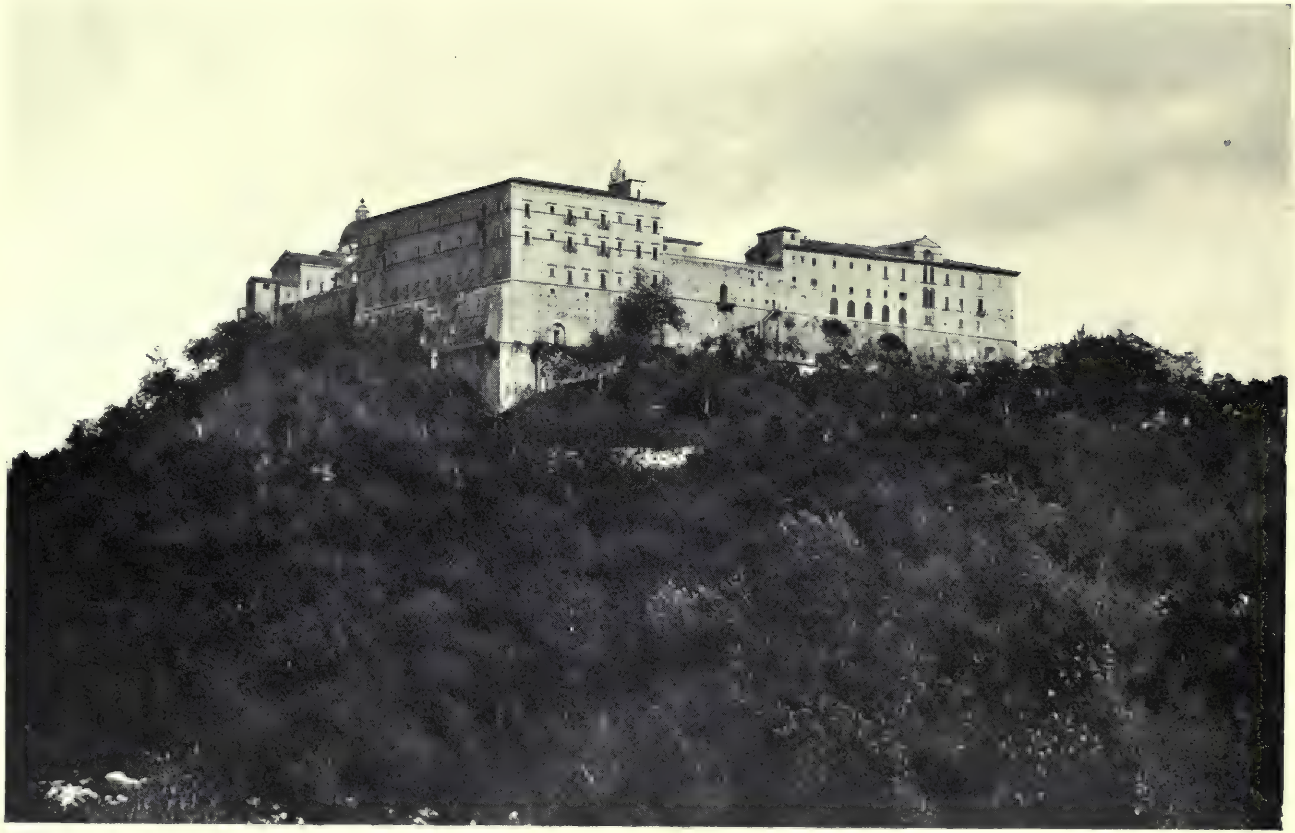
BUFFALO IN THE PONTINE MARSHES.

cow-boys failed to make the slightest impression on the *butteri* of the Roman Campagna and the Pontine Marshes. Indeed, the *butteri* were quite the reverse of impressed, and one of them in my hearing scornfully dismissed the whole performance as savouring of "un circo equestre di terz' ordine." I confess I thoroughly agreed with him, for a more miserable exhibition than that which "Buffalo Bill" thought sufficient for the Romans I have seldom witnessed, and the stock-in-trade tricks and antics of his cowboys and their steeds were laughable when compared with the feats of genuine horsemanship, ability, and cool courage which any *buttero* performs in the course of his day's work without for a moment supposing himself to be doing anything worthy of particular notice.

Willingly would one linger in this district of marsh and mountain; but it would be useless to conceal the fact that the accommodation afforded by the inns does not lend itself to any prolonged stay. I am tempted to take my readers to such places as Sora, and to explore with them the course of the lovely little river Liris to its source in the recesses of the Volscian mountains; or to Sonnino, and to the historic and secluded monastery of Fossanova. But I must not trespass upon the domain of the guide-books; though, to say the truth, they are sadly deficient in any accurate information regarding these remote spots seldom visited by tourists. I have often wondered why some enterprising traveller does not devote his mind and his body (I say "his body" advisedly, for it would assuredly suffer in the process) to producing a book dealing with the

Pontine Marshes and the Volscian towns and monasteries. The thing has been done in the past, by such writers as Goethe, About, Hans Andersen, Gregorovius, and others. But the modern pen would have to be wielded by a writer who was not exclusively a poet, an historian, or a word-painter, but who was possessed of some of the gifts belonging to each of these. Especially, too, in the case of the Pontine Marshes, should he be a naturalist; for to the lover of birds, beasts, flowers, and insects, and to the student of their habits and haunts, this district, which is popularly supposed to be nothing but a fever-ridden and dreary swamp, is full of never-ending beauties and delight.

No one, I imagine, who sees for the first time the great Benedictine Abbey of Cassino perched on its mountain-top will fail to experience an irresistible desire to find himself within its walls. A beacon of learning, of goodness, and of charity shining in the darkness of the Middle Ages, this famous monastery must command the admiration and respect of every educated individual, whatever his personal opinions as to the utility of monks and nuns in general may happen to be. Indeed, Monte Cassino commands not only these tributes from the educated of all Western nations and races, but also that of gratitude; for how much does not every one among us owe to the enlightening and humanising influence of the Benedictines in the past, and therefore, indirectly, to this great fountain-head of learning and civilisation seated peacefully and majestically on its mass of rock, and visible for many miles distant—a landmark standing over the



Photo] [Alinari.

MONTE CASSINO.

seas of doubt and ignorance? I am not going to enter upon the history either of Monte Cassino or of its founder, St. Benedict. As to their last, he was so great and good a man that one can only regret his official enrolment among the canonised—that is to say, when one reflects upon the number of ruffians and impostors upon whom the Roman Church, for political or pecuniary considerations, has conferred the "honours of the altar."

I have only one grudge against St. Benedict; and that is, that he destroyed a great and famous temple of Apollo in order to build his more modern sanctuary, and that at the same time he cut down a grove dedicated to Venus. The temple, I feel convinced, was a far finer thing than the monastic buildings; and though, no doubt, the grove sacred to Venus left much to be desired as regards the morality of its frequenters, I have no sympathy whatever with any one, saint or otherwise, who ruthlessly destroys trees. At any rate, in the case of Monte Cassino, I shall always regard it as a deplorable error on the part of St. Benedict that he did not do any replanting on his mountain; for a more barren spot it would be difficult to conceive, and its barrenness is made the more aggressive by the luxuriant vegetation of the country in its immediate vicinity. In ancient days the Abbot of Monte Cassino was lord of countless castles, fiefs, and townships, as well as of more than one principality. At the present time a certain number of monks are permitted to remain, and they are ever ready to give kindly welcome and hospitality to strangers. A considerable portion of the world-renowned library of the monastery still exists, and among the priceless MSS. are many documents bearing the signatures of the most famous Popes, Emperors, and Kings, representing a period of more than a thousand years. The existing fabric at Monte Cassino is, of course, comparatively modern. In many ways—perhaps in most ways—Subiaco, that lovely Sabine district in which St. Benedict first established his Order, is more impressive than Monte Cassino. It is certainly more poetic. But at Monte Cassino one feels, as I have already said, a deep gratitude for that light of learning and that stream of civilising elements which throughout the darkness of the Middle Ages emanated from its walls.

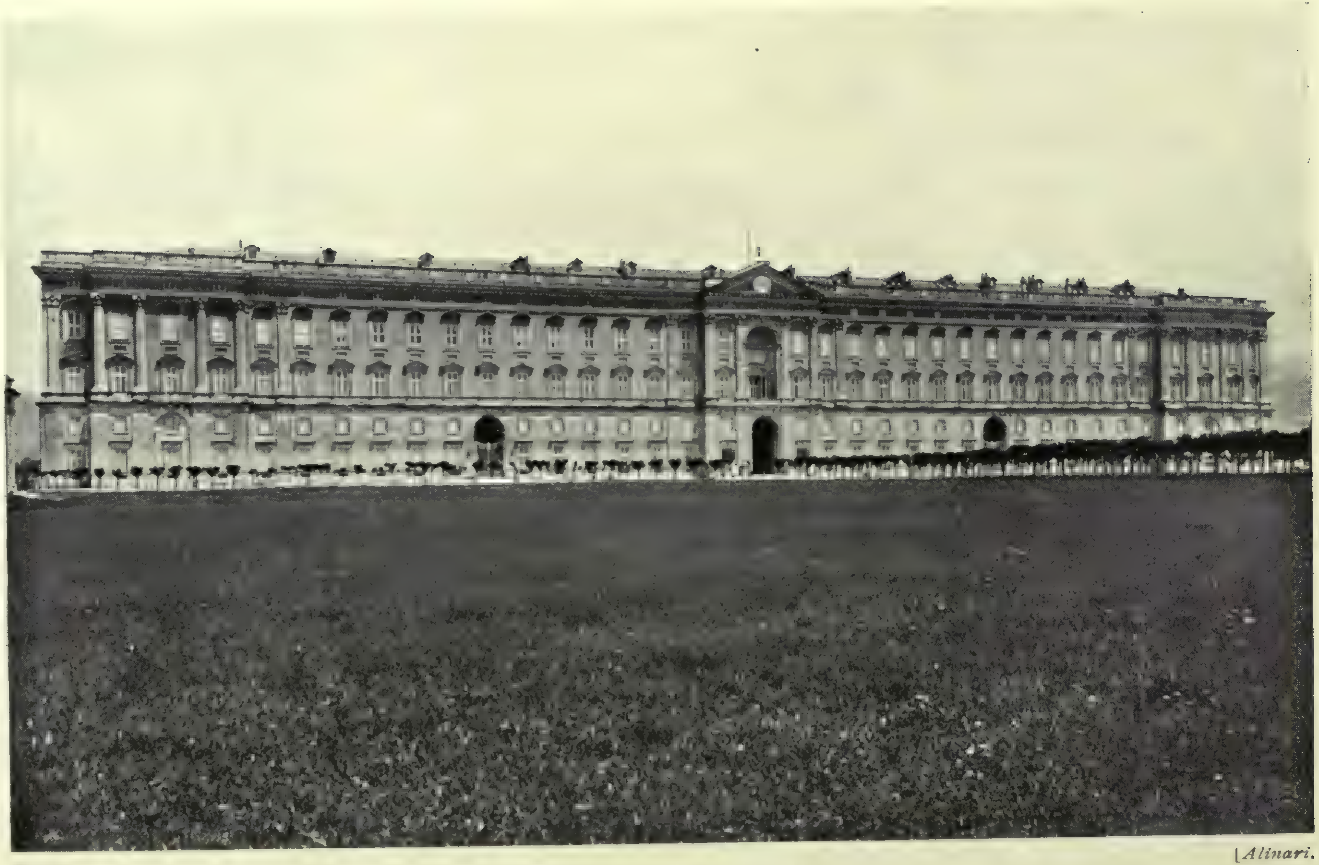
But whenever I have got as far as Monte Cassino, I have begun to feel Naples and Magna Grecia calling me. I am often afraid that when I am in Italy I am half a pagan at heart; and that when I approach the south of the Italian peninsula the half extends itself to two-thirds. Perhaps, after all, in this respect I do not differ so much from the *meridionali* as my Anglo-Saxon blood ought to ensure of my doing!

CHAPTER X

CONCERNING THE NEAPOLITANS

NAPLES undoubtedly ought to be approached by sea, rather than by rail. Far more so than Venice—more, indeed, than any other city, is she a City of the Sea. Personally, of all Italian cities, Naples appeals to me the most. I am quite aware that this confession will call forth a grunt of dissent and disapproval from the majority of my English readers, and very possibly some unflattering remarks as to my lack of good taste, and, perhaps, of good sense both artistic and moral. "Beastly, noisy hole" is the expression with which most English people dismiss Naples; while the Neapolitans are usually referred to as a race steeped to the core in every sort of villainy and iniquity. Now, I can sympathise with both criticisms; or, rather, I can sympathise with that altogether superficial frame of mind which gives rise to them. I have passed through that phase myself; and I suppose that most foreigners have experienced it on finding themselves for the first time in Naples and among the Neapolitans. I will even go so far as to admit that one must have a peculiar temperament really to appreciate the great, noisy, ill-conditioned city; and that, in order to do so, one must banish from one's mind some pet prejudices. Assuredly, he who judges Naples and the Neapolitans from the Anglo-Saxon point of view of customs and morals will never fall under the spell of the place—and Naples will for ever remain to him a "beastly, noisy hole," only made tolerable by the natural beauties of her surroundings and by the art treasures in her magnificent museums.

As I have taken my readers through the Pontine Marshes and as far as Monte Cassino, I cannot bring them into Naples with me by sea. I regret the inability; for the water-way into the Neapolitan Gulf is a dream of beauty, especially if undertaken in the early hours of a spring or summer morning, when the islands of Ischia, Procida, and Capri are glowing like jewels in the rays of the newly risen sun, and the great city lies bathed in a delicate pink light as though wrought out of the corals in which she does so large a trade. Except that to Constantinople, I know of no sea-approach so lovely, and certainly none at all so rich in history, legend, and tradition, as the entry into Naples by her water-gates. I am bound to admit, however, that once the vessel has come into port, beauty and romance flee away for a time, and the traveller may well be excused for wondering whether he has not happened upon an *inferno*, and whether the screaming, gesticulating, foul-mouthed, and often foul-gestured crowd by which it is instantly surrounded be not demons rather than human beings. He may take heart. Everything that is vilest and most base congregates around the port of Naples, and it is only just to remember that a large proportion of the



Photo] [*Alinari.*

THE PALACE OF CASERTA.

appalling types of humanity, male and female, which the arrival and departure of every passenger steamer attract, are not Neapolitans, but Greeks, Levantines, Maltese—the scum of the Mediterranean. Things are better than they used to be, but it is still a matter for surprise that the police authorities of Naples do not do more than they do to keep this scum in order. Concerning the Neapolitan police, however, I shall have something to say hereafter.

There is at least one compensation which I can offer for having continued our journey from Monte Cassino by land instead of water, quite apart from the obvious fact that there is no choice in the matter.

Of the many who hurry from Rome to Naples by rail or road, there are comparatively very few who take the trouble to break their journey at Caserta. And yet here is to be seen one of the finest royal palaces in the world. Both inside and outside it is a magnificent building, and the pity of it is that it should be to all intents and purposes deserted. Built by Charles III. in 1750, it is a rival, and no mean one, of Versailles; and its interior, indeed, far surpasses in stateliness the palace of the Roi Soleil. The park and gardens behind it, with their wonderful cascades and "conceits," still speak, albeit pathetically, of past pomps and pleasures. The number of royal palaces and villas which, since the suppression of the various Italian States and their unification into the Kingdom of Italy, the sovereign has to maintain are endless. None of them, however, equals that of Caserta, for none of them has so regal an aspect. It is a pity that it is not in Rome instead of in a small and altogether unattractive suburban town, for it would certainly form a far more fitting abode for the sovereigns of Italy than that particularly ugly and tasteless edifice, the Quirinal.

Caserta, however, as a town, possesses no attractions. A considerable number of troops are kept here, not only for the protection of Naples, but also because from this point communication is easy with the Adriatic coast. I sincerely pity the soldiers who are quartered here, and, from what I have heard from some among them, I imagine that they pity themselves. No doubt there are compensations, but I fancy that the chief one is the vicinity of Naples.

Until comparatively recent years the arrival by rail at Naples was almost as disagreeable an ordeal as the arrival by sea. The stranger was apt to be literally besieged, in his railway carriage, by touts and villains of all kinds before the train had finally come to a standstill. Now, however, all this is changed, and it would be well if the authorities of the port exercised as much vigilance and care for the comfort of travellers as do those of the railway station. These observations, however, are beside the mark. With first impressions of Naples I have no intention of concerning myself or my readers. In stating the fact that they are, owing to the immense purification —I can use no other term—of the city, which its municipal authorities have accomplished in the last few years, infinitely more pleasant than they were, I by no means wish to assume that they are as agreeable as they might be. I believe that there is a certain tropical fruit which is equalled by none for its delicious flavour, but which possesses a rind of perfectly appalling nastiness. Well, it is the rind of Naples that one must carefully put to one side, though, personally, I have come to realise that, if one wishes properly to appreciate the place and the people, it is not wise to put it aside entirely as being too unpleasant for examination.

The German historian, Von Raümer, than whom few have written of things Neapolitan in a more exhaustive and delightful way, observes that the Neapolitans were created before the fuss concerning the seven deadly sins. The observation is not really so cynical as it would appear to be. The Neapolitans are the children of circumstances, and to understand them it is very necessary to have some acquaintance with the circumstances which produced them. The long centuries of appalling tyranny and misgovernment which followed the fall of the Hohenstaufen dynasty—in the course of which the unspeakable Houses of Anjou and Aragon successively vanished in a mist of blood and cruelty, to be replaced by cruel and bigoted rulers belonging to the House of Bourbon—would have demoralised a population of angels. I am not suggesting that the Neapolitans at any time in their history were possessed of angelic qualities; but I do suggest that they are not quite as black as they are usually painted. Immoral, as a whole, they undoubtedly are; but at least their immorality has none of that hypocritical mask which immorality is constrained to wear in many places upon which the world does not look askance, as it does upon Naples. There is something refreshing in that.

Now, immorality is a wide term, embracing various modes of departure from those standards of conduct to which we are all of us anxious that our neighbours should believe us to adhere. I do not think it either necessary or becoming that I should dwell upon the very frank and open indifference on the part of a large section of the inhabitants of Naples and its surroundings towards what is generally implied by the word morals. This indifference certainly exists, and it is apt to show itself in ways that are startling to the inexperienced stranger. It is quite useless, however, for the stranger to wax indignant over the matter, or to feel that his own morality, or even dignity, is insulted should he find himself exposed to passing incidents which might justly excite his resentment should they occur to him elsewhere. Let him take a little word of warning, and dismiss any such little incidents with a cheerful laugh instead of an angry frown or an indignant rejoinder. The contemptuous but good-natured laugh will be at once understood; but the scandalised frown or angry word is as likely as not to lead to complications. It should never be forgotten that Naples is one of the gates of the East, and that she has always been so. Eastern and Western views on certain matters are not identical, as we all know. I do not remember who it was who said, or wrote, that morals are a mere question of geography, but there is indisputably a great deal of truth in the observation.

To the stranger wandering about the streets of Naples I would venture to give one golden rule—a rule practised by all respectable Neapolitans themselves. The golden rule is to be silent when any observation is addressed to one by any person whose attitude may be suspicious. Silence in Naples is, indeed, golden, and a gesture produces more effective results than any number of words; but the gesture must be the right one—understanded of the people. There are many such gestures, but one among them is of particular utility, for it at once implies that its maker "knows his way about," and that he cannot be such a stranger to Naples as, perhaps, his outward appearance may lead his accosters to suppose. The gesture in question is a very simple one. It consists merely of a slow and indolent upward movement of the head, performed as though it were too much trouble to use speech.

Let me explain clearly. The head must not be shaken, for this motion, however violent or decisive, would imply nothing beyond that its owner was a foreigner speaking no language but his own. But if the lazy, upward motion is properly performed, and its performance is accompanied by absolute silence, the immediate results obtained are almost always surprising. Your accoster, whether beggar, tout, "guide"—I place the word in inverted commas designedly—or other form of scoundrel, will probably fall back and disappear as if by magic among the crowd. The simple little gesture will have told him, in far plainer language than any you could use, that, "non c'è da far' nulla," or, in vulgar English, that it was a case of "no go." Nor is instant relief from present persecution—from beggars, cabmen, touts, and other gentry of a still more objectionable and even dangerous a nature—the only beneficial result which the gesture I singled out from among many of a similar kind will obtain. It is extraordinary that, in so large and populous a city as Naples, a stranger should so quickly become known by sight to those belonging to the Mala Vita, as it is called. It is a fact, however, that in an incredibly short space of time—a few days at most—if an individual, of no matter what nationality, practise one of these gestures when occasion arises, he will find himself able to walk anywhere without being exposed to molestations of any sort.

I must truthfully say that it is not, as a rule, in the most populous parts of Naples, such as in the old quarters of the city—into which, by the way, for some inexplicable reason foreigners comparatively rarely penetrate—that one is liable to meet with these molestations. These quarters have their Mala Vita too, and a "malissima vita" it often is, but the stranger is not likely to encounter it, unless, of course, he be in deliberate quest of adventures. The worst of Neapolitan life, in so far as this life affects the foreigner, is concentrated round those more fashionable parts of the modern quarters where foreigners chiefly congregate, and also in and around the Galleria, which is the resort of all that is most corrupt.

But I will not dwell any longer on these unsavoury subjects. So far as personal safety is concerned, a stranger may explore every part of Naples on foot without incurring any more danger than would be the case in other cities. Of course, as I have observed before, if he is in search of adventures, he may find them in greater variety than, probably, in any other European city. In this case, however, he must blame himself rather than the Neapolitans if disagreeable things befall him. A stranger, who is not in search of adventures but merely gratifying a natural taste for exploration and the indulgence of curiosity, has only to conduct himself with ordinary prudence, and nothing very unpleasant is at all likely to happen to him.

There is one little trap, however, into which even the most prudent might unwittingly fall, and into this, I believe, many strangers do fall, with consequences which, though not really serious, must be annoying enough, and also, probably, a little expensive. The offers frequently made by loafing youths to act as guide to some sight—the offer very often takes the form of conducting the stranger to the residence of the sacristan of some church which he has found closed—should be promptly declined, and this not by words, but by the silent gesture I have described. But, whatever the nature of the nets spread for the unwary may be, they are better avoided by laughter than by any display of scandalised indignation or wrath. That there should be the slightest legitimate cause for the latter the Neapolitan could never be made to understand. He was created before the fuss arose concerning the seven deadly sins. But laughter, so long as it is good-natured, appeals to him; and, if he be evilly inclined, his evil intentions generally melt away under its influence.

The chief factor in the Mala Vita of Naples is, of course, the Camorra. The Camorra is not, as is often imagined, a vast and mysterious secret society possessing unlimited power. In point of fact it is not a secret society at all, though certain absurd and melodramatic formalities are performed at the initiation of a Camorrista. It is rather an entirely sordid and corrupt state obtaining in an enormous section of Neapolitan life—an abominable system of blackmailing carried on at the expense of those who are earning their living whether honestly or dishonestly. The Camorra preys more or less on every class of the population, and penetrates into every department of the public service. Even the prisons are under its influence, and so, it is regrettable to say, are the police. Of recent years much has been done by the Government to eradicate this canker; but so long as there is corruption in high places, and its assistance is invoked by officials and other comparatively prosperous individuals to further their personal aims or the political aims of some candidate for parliamentary or municipal elections, the process of eradication must perforce be extremely slow. Even as I write, a trial is taking place at Viterbo, to which city it was removed from Naples for obvious reasons, which reveals not only the depths of sordid depravity of the Camorristi, but also the far-reaching influence which the Camorra still exerts in the middle and lower strata of Neapolitan life.

But we need waste no time on so low and contemptible an institution as the Camorra—if institution it can be called. Foreigners are never brought into contact with it, unless, unhappily, they have business relations with those who are under its influence.

It belongs to the black and seamy side of Naples; and, in a city in which there is so much that is beautiful, and among a population which, when all is said and done, is by no means as bad at heart as it would, perhaps, at first sight appear to be, why should we dwell upon ugliness?

I suppose that most sojourners at Naples take up their abode at one of the many hotels along the Chiaia and the Via Caracciolo, as being the most conveniently situated for sight-seeing. Probably the picturesque black mass of the Castel dell' Uovo, the Castle of the Egg, is the most prominent object they look upon from their windows. The Neapolitans will tell you that the poet-wizard—at Naples he is far more wizard than poet—Virgil raised it in a night, laying its foundations on an egg. This, however, was a trifle compared with some of the feats the poet is said to have performed at Naples and in its vicinity.

Strange legends are told of the Castel dell' Uovo—of its secret passages running to the grim Castel Nuovo half a mile off, of its caverns under the sea full of treasure and guarded by demons who, on the discovery of the gold and jewels, would break the wizard's egg and cause the castle itself to disappear for ever under the sea. Many and wonderful are the tales, some of them going back to a dozen or more of centuries, which are told of Virgil's magic deeds on this bit of coast, which ancient tradition declares to be also his place of burial. In the early Middle Ages, and no doubt long before that period, the body of the mighty wizard—for his wizardry seems ever to have been more popular than his poetry—was believed to rest in a fortress surrounded by the sea, evidently the Castel dell' Uovo. It is even said that King Roger of Sicily gave permission to a certain Englishman of learning to keep the poet's bones if he could find them. And find them the Englishman did. The body was lying in a tomb hewn out of rock in a cliff, and it was no case of bones only, but of flesh covering them—incorrupt and intact as on the day of death. The head was supported by volumes of magic lore. Perhaps it was because the English scholar found no bones, but good solid flesh, that King Roger's representative at Naples thought himself justified in breaking the royal promise; for he refused to give up Virgil's body to a foreign pedant, but permitted him to take the volumes away with him to England. Perhaps our own wizard got some useful hints out of them afterwards—for Michael Scott, too, exercised his art in Southern Italy. As to the body, the viceroy removed it to the Castel dell' Uovo, where I for one intend to believe that it still remains, together with the treasure, the demon guardians, and the magic egg which supports the grim old castle.

It is a great mistake to be anything but a pagan in Magna Grecia, and especially on the Campanian coast. I do not mean the least irreverence when I say that, in these districts, Christianity appears to be a most uninteresting and even vulgar creed. Saints and martyrs cut but sorry figures beside the ancient gods and their attendant companies of sirens, nymphs, dryads, fauns, and satyrs. The Madonna is the only personage in the Christian celestial hierarchy who rises to the situation. She is never out of the picture—doubtless because all that she does is in itself so palpably pagan—and she never does anything unpleasant, or anything which is out of harmony with the poetic beauty of her surroundings. The saints and the martyrs, on the other hand, are even more tiresome and tactless people than they are elsewhere, which, in the case of very many among them, is saying a great deal.

By far the most interesting building historically is the Castel Nuovo, and I believe that comparatively few strangers visit it during their stay in Naples. Perhaps this is because it is guarded by sentinels, and would-be visitors are afraid of being turned away. Any one may enter its frowning gateway, however, on mentioning that he wishes to see the interior of the castle. The palace of the Anjou and Aragon dynasties, all that was most brilliant, and all that was darkest and most tragic in the history of Naples was enacted here. Of the brilliancy there are few remaining traces, but of the tragic there are many, and among them one at least which, for its horrible grimness, is not to be outdone by any chamber of horrors in the world. An "official" guide, who is sometimes a small and extremely dirty boy, and sometimes a personage clad in uniform, will take the visitor through various gloomy, vaulted apartments to the Chapel of Santa Barbara; and, after showing this, will probably intimate to him that there is nothing more to see.

There is a good deal more to see, however, and those who have a taste for horrors will do well to hint that they would like to be shown the secret chamber under the sacristy. The request is seldom denied. Candles are lighted, and the visitor is taken through a low doorway and down a stone staircase in the thickness of the wall into a mysterious room. When his eyes have become accustomed to the dim light shed by the flickering candle ends, his first impression will be that of having penetrated into a family vault. Four coffins are arranged on low shelves, and two of them are open. Each of these contains the mummified body of a man; but the heads are not on the shoulders. They lie alongside of them. So far, the sight is grim enough, but one feels that there must be similar ones even in such eminently respectable places of burial as Westminster Abbey. There is much worse to come. The guide raises the lid of one of the closed coffins, and I defy any one who sees its contents not to start back in very genuine horror and disgust. The corpse is that of a powerful man who has met his death by strangulation. The stiffened, mummified limbs, and the terrible look of anguish on the distorted face, the attitude of the arms and hands—all bear witness to an appalling struggle for life. They bear witness, too, to appalling acts of treachery and cruelty, do these four pitiful corpses, for they are dressed in gay attire, and evidently met their deaths at a moment when they least expected to do so.

One's natural question is—Who were these unfortunates, and why have their bodies been so carefully preserved? I will quote an extract from an old historian, who says: "It was the constant habit of King Ferdinand and King Alfonso (of

Aragon), when their enemies had fallen into their hands, to cut off their heads and keep them salted in chambers underneath their palace." It is permissible to infer that the four corpses, preserved in their entirety, and in the very clothes they were wearing when they were murdered, were those of some very special and dreaded enemies; and no doubt King Ferdinand, or King Alfonso, amused himself by occasionally paying a visit to this chamber to gloat over his fallen foes and to satisfy himself that they were really dead and harmless. However this may be, I know no grimmer spectacle than that which is held by this underground chamber beneath the Castel Nuovo, nor any which affords so positive a proof of the fiendish cruelty of the Aragon rulers of Naples. King Alfonso, indeed, is reported to have committed a deed of such nameless horror on a band of political refugees, who had taken sanctuary in a church now no longer in existence, that no man was found to write down its details. Whatever it was, it was bad enough finally to arouse the conscience even of the monster who committed it. Haunted by a terrible remorse, he abandoned his crown and fled to a Sicilian monastery, in which he ended his evil days.

For some unaccountable reason the most ancient, and by far the most interesting, portion of Naples does not receive the attention from foreigners that it deserves. These, as a rule, confine their peregrinations to the more fashionable parts of the city, and to the business quarters. But the narrow lanes and stairs of the old part of Naples have a peculiar attraction of their own. They are dirty, of course, and their smells are many, and of, sometimes, quite laughable nastiness; they are crowded, and abominably noisy. But, notwithstanding all such drawbacks, those who know something of the history and of the folklore of Naples, and who wish to study Neapolitan life, will find them full of links with the past. By turning out of the interminable Via Roma, as it is now called, though its original name of Via Toledo might surely have been adhered to with advantage, if only for the purpose of maintaining its ancient traditions, the Via dei Tribunali is soon reached, and by this characteristic Neapolitan thoroughfare it is easy to penetrate into some of the most interesting parts of old Naples.

It is the fashion to scoff at the Neapolitan churches as being architecturally in the worst possible Barocco taste, and so, indeed, they are. They have a habit, too, of shutting themselves up from ten o'clock in the morning till late in the afternoon; therefore, it is well to visit them early if one wishes to see their contents. To any one versed in the history of Naples these sanctuaries are repositories of vast interest; and to the student of humanity they are places in which the by-paths of human nature may be studied with enormous advantage. It is in the churches that an insight into Neapolitan life may be gained, especially by any one who can follow sufficiently the Neapolitan dialect. Here, if one keeps one's eyes and one's ears open, one may observe how religious superstition and all the passions to which human nature is the victim are made subservient to each other. Perhaps, in the case of the Neapolitans and of the *Meridionali* generally, it is as well that they should be so. Were it not for their religion—very far removed from genuine Catholicism as it is, being, in reality, merely a debased form of polytheism—it would be difficult to discover any influence which would act as a check on passions liable at any moment to become unbridled.

I am speaking, of course, of the *basso popolo.* And yet there can be no greater mistake than to suppose that even among the *basso popolo* there are not to be found characteristics making not only for righteousness, but for the formation of an energetic and virile race. Amidst much that is sordid and unworthy there is much among this strange people which commands admiration. They are amazingly ready to succour each other when in distress. Contrary to the general idea entertained by foreigners regarding them, they are extraordinarily hard-working—while they are at work—and they perform their work in a far more honest and conscientious spirit than, I fear, does a very large percentage of British workmen in the present day.

Their kindness to their children is carried to an almost exaggerated extent, and it is a pity that the same kindness is not extended to their animals. For Italian cruelty to animals, however, the priests are largely—perhaps, indeed, entirely—to blame. For centuries the priests have openly scoffed at any responsibility on the part of man towards lower animals, on the ground that the last have no souls. To their credit be it said that in Naples there are several enlightened priests who do all in their power to remedy the abuses created by the attitude of their colleagues in this matter. The improvement in the treatment of horses and mules of late years is immense. By one of those strange inconsistencies of the human mind—and especially of the Latin mind—which are so difficult to account for, this very religion, which practically denies any responsibility on the part of a man for the welfare of his beast, is very punctilious that the said beast should receive the blessing of the Church on the feast of San Antonio! Moreover, notwithstanding the dictum of the priests that animals have no "souls," the idea that a future state awaits them is deeply engrained in the minds of the lower orders throughout Italy. Some years ago the *fattore* of a large landed proprietor of my acquaintance had occasion to announce to his employer an outbreak of some mysterious disease among the live-stock on his *fattoria*, and the fact that many cattle and pigs had been carried off by it. The last incident was tersely expressed in his letter in the following words: —"E molti ce ne sono andati in Paradiso."

But when all is said and done, we English are the last people in the world who can afford to preach to others on the subject of cruelty to animals. A nation which tolerates private slaughter-houses destitute of any official control or supervision; which shuts its eyes to the untold horrors that take place on any estate where game is preserved and where the trapping is not subjected to a rigorous supervision, not only as to the nature of the traps used, but also as to the regularity with which they are visited; a nation which permits the existence of certain "sports" indulged in by the populace for the sake of gambling—has no right to criticise the humanity of other races. That much unnecessary cruelty to animals exists in Italy, and especially in the south of Italy, no one will deny. But, like private morals, cruelty to animals appears to me to depend upon geography. The Englishman is indignant that a horse or a mule should be ill-treated — but he regards certain cruelties practised on other equally sentient creatures with the utmost indifference, though these cruelties would revolt an Italian.

The fact is that the Englishman is an arrant hypocrite in this as in many other things. He exclaims loudly against Italian barbarism because he sees a horse or a mule beaten or worked with a sore back—and yet he never stops to think of the daily barbarisms his keepers are perpetrating at home. As to the overloading and overworking of beasts of traction, I have never seen in all Italy worse examples of this form of cruelty to animals than may be seen any day during the tourist season in Scotland, where horses are worse treated in this way by hotel and livery-stable proprietors than in any country I know. Moreover, in the whole of Italy I will mention one place in which merciless cruelty to oxen and other beasts of traction is carried to an extent which makes a visit to it well-nigh unendurable—and that place is the marble quarries of Carrara, which are chiefly under the direction of English companies.

The Italian is seldom cruel for cruelty's sake.

He is thoughtless and impatient, and of course there are brutes in human form in Italy as there are in England who delight in inflicting pain. But in the general way even the roughest Italian is not brutal. In nine cases out of ten one may see a carter giving all his strength to assist the efforts of his overladen beast. That it should be overladen is often not his fault, but that of his employer. It is almost invariably, too, the fault of the Government which taxes the poor man's beast of burden to an excessive extent, thereby compelling him to make one animal suffice to do the work of two or more.

The Italian public will not tolerate barbarous spectacles given for public amusement. Some years ago an attempt was made to add bull-fights to the attractions of the Carnival at a well-known resort on the Italian Riviera. An Italian friend of mine asked me if I would, as an Englishman, protest in the name of my compatriots, who so largely frequent the place in question, against this foreign introduction, by writing to a leading Roman newspaper on the subject. I ventured to do this, basing my protest not as coming from one belonging to a nation which did not possess the slightest right to consider itself more humane to animals, except theoretically, than another, but as a simple foreigner who regretted any attempt to make Italy take a backward step in civilisation. My letter of protest was supported so widely throughout Italy that an order was at once sent from Rome to the Prefect of the province in which the place was situated that no proposal of the kind was to be entertained.

It turned out that the promoters of the scheme were chiefly foreigners, among whom English people were prominent. And, indeed, I have sometimes smiled to myself when I have been in Spanish towns while bull-fights were going on, at the way in which English people, both male and female, would hasten to the arena to witness them, while I have not the slightest doubt that the same excellent though entirely illogical individuals would have excited themselves to a white heat of indignation if the driver of the carriage which conveyed them thither had flogged his horses. At the time of writing, a similar proposal emanating from a group of speculators to hold bull-fights in the newly formed stadium at Rome during the Roman Exhibition has raised a storm of indignation in the country, and even the students at the Roman University have formally protested against it in the name of humanity. The proposal, of course, has been scouted by the authorities, although the usual assurances were given by its promoters that neither bulls nor horses should be killed in the course of the performances. I mention these facts in order to attempt to demonstrate to my English readers that Italians are by no means the cruel people that they are too ready to believe them to be—and also to assure them that charges of cruelty to animals, coming from a people which tolerates in their midst such abuses as I have named, are of precisely the same nature as the charges brought by the pot against the kettle.

The Society for the Protection of Animals which exists at Rome and in Naples, under the title of *Società contro il maltrattimento degli Animali*, has done vigorous and excellent work for many years in both cities, and there exist other societies of purely Italian organisation in other parts of Italy for the same object. There can be no doubt, however, that the often silly and sentimental attitude of our compatriots in the matter, and the exaggerated charges they are so prone to utter and to print regarding Italian inhumanity to animals, has done much to deprive the Roman society of Italian sympathy. How often have I not heard English people pour out a torrent of abuse (in their own tongue, of course!) against some perfectly harmless driver who happened to be encouraging his horse in the native way of cracking his whip close to the animal's flanks or ears. In vain have I pointed out that the lash on these occasions never touches the beast. No; the man was Italian, therefore he was cruel to horses, and of course he was flogging his horse most brutally! Most people interested in the subject will have seen the "museum" of the Roman society in question at their offices in Rome, where instruments of torture confiscated by officers of the society are exposed to view. These, indeed, are horrible enough, and among the *carettieri*, especially the *carettieri* of Rome and the Roman province, there are, I fear, many inhuman brutes. But not on account of these, the lowest scum of the population, should exaggerated charges of inhumanity, such as too often find their way into English print against Italians in general, be based.

As to Naples, it is sufficient to look at the smart, well-cared-for little horses that draw the public cabs, and compare them with those of a dozen years ago to realise how greatly the lives of these animals have changed for the better; and the same may be said of the mules and donkeys belonging to the humbler ranks of the population. To the Naples Branch of the Society for the Protection of Animals is due this improvement; and also, it is pleasant to add, to the efforts of certain of the Naples clergy who have had the courage to depart from the traditional attitude of the priests towards cruelty to animals, and to propagate among the lower classes a sense of responsibility towards the creatures which assist them to gain their living.

As I am discoursing about humanity, I may as well mention that it is well-nigh impossible to an Italian to believe that there should be any place in a civilised country for a society for the protection of children. I have sometimes been asked by Italians, when discussing the question of cruelty to animals, and the work done by the societies existing for its suppression, whether it were really a fact that in England there was an important body which carried on a similar work in aid of ill-treated children. And when, most unwillingly, I have been obliged to confess that not only did such a body exist, but that it was a very necessary institution, I have seen reflected on the countenances of the inquirers something of the irony of the situation.

But we were in the Via dei Tribunali when I made this sudden digression. I wish that the space at my disposal enabled me to enter more largely into details regarding the almost endless store of historic and traditional associations which make the old portion of Naples so interesting. My business, however, is to discuss only the characteristics of life in Italy, and not to intrude into the domain of the historian, the archæologist, or even of the compilers of guide-books.

All around the Strada de' Tribunali, to give it its correct name, are networks of passages, dark, narrow streets, and alleys which are the haunts of the Camorristi, and of that inner, mysterious, lurid life which seethes and bubbles below the surface of things in Naples. There is nothing that touches this grade of the population, unless it be their religious superstitions, and even these are made subservient to their humour. I suppose that the street scenes in this quarter of the city differ in no way from those which took place in the days of the Anjou and the Aragon rule. Nay, probably they differ but slightly from those which enlivened the streets of Pompeii and Herculaneum in classic times. Every tenth man one encounters is selling something, and one wonders whether the Neapolitan of the people is ever under any necessity to enter a shop. Indeed, if you were so disposed, you might pass your whole day in the Strada de' Tribunali, and I do not believe that there is a want which you could not gratify at the price of a *soldo* without stirring from any spot you chose to select. I am presuming, of course, that these wants should be those which suffice to the Neapolitan who purchases his food, his clothes, and other necessities of life, who conducts his affairs and even his correspondence in the open street. There are other domestic matters, too, which are apt to be conducted in the open street upon which it would be unseemly to dwell. It is all a little shocking at first, no doubt; but one soon becomes used to it. After all, it is pure naturalism; and whatever else the Neapolitan may be, in certain things he is no hypocrite.

Leaving the Strada de' Tribunali, we may wander into the Largo and the Via Mezzacannone, and here we are surrounded by grim palaces—palaces no longer now, but given over to commerce—once the residences of the greatest families of Naples. What names recur to the memory as we thread these streets! Here Boccaccio rambled in search of adventures which were afterwards to move the world to laughter through the pages of the *Decameron.* In the great Church of Santa Chiara near by, Giotto painted — but alas, Spanish vandalism in the eighteenth century caused the whitewash brush to be passed over all the lovely frescoes he executed, and scarcely one survives to-day. There is a story to the effect that Giotto's patron, King Robert of Sicily, found the artist busily at work when the thermometer (had there existed such an instrument in those days) would have registered something phenomenal in the way of heat. The king expostulated. "If I were you, Giotto," he said, "I should not work in this weather." The painter looked up. "Neither should I—if I were you," he answered, and went on with his painting.

In Santa Chiara many scoundrels of the House of Anjou are lying buried, and one feels that they would be unpleasant company among which to find oneself at the Judgment Day. That splendid Court attracted to Naples all that was most famous in art, literature, and philosophy in those days. I think those dead celebrities live again in the imagination more vividly at Naples than at Florence or Rome. Perhaps this may be because both Rome and Florence are very different from what they were when that goodly company of artists and men of letters trod their streets; whereas much of the restless, lurid life passing around us in the old quarters of Naples must be identically the same which Giotto, Boccaccio, and all the rest of the brilliant company of Florentines saw and mingled with. And what a medley it all is, and how suggestive! It is all very well to call these people Neapolitan, if by Neapolitan one means to imply Greeks, Orientals, Saracens, Normans, Spaniards, and Italians all rolled into one race. Of all the ingredients, the Italian is the smallest measure, though perhaps it would not do to say so in these days—except to Italians, who would regard the observation as complimentary rather than otherwise.

There are other great churches hereabouts full of interesting tradition—the Gesù, San Domenico Maggiore, and San Lorenzo. Was it not in San Lorenzo that Boccaccio first saw "Fiammetta," that naughty Anjou princess? No doubt they ought both of them to have been attending devoutly to Mass instead of staring about them. But then, if they had not stared about them, the *Decameron* would perhaps never have been written, and certainly other works of Boccaccio, such as the *Filocopo*, would never have seen the light. Then there is the Cathedral—the Duomo—and it, too, is a place in which to pause and muse. Innocent IV. is buried here, that great Pope, the Destroyer of the Empire, whose ambition brought down a curse on Europe which endured for many centuries in the form of the temporal sovereignty of the Popes, the effects of which the world has even yet scarcely got rid. Here, of course, San Gennaro, St. Januarius, works his yearly fraud, or rather the priests work it for him. There are those who are impressed by this "miracle." It is certainly an object-lesson in dishonesty, for, sanctioned by the Church and supported by the authorities year after year, this fraud is perpetrated in the presence of thousands. One smiles as one thinks of the early Christian fathers and their tirades against paganism. Were any of the supernatural wonders worked by the priests and priestesses of the ancient faiths more sordid and more absurd than the "miracles" worked by Christian machinery? Occasionally, but very rarely, the spell does not work, and the blood of San Gennaro is not allowed to liquefy. It would obviously be foolish to permit the miracle to become a matter of certainty. Then, of course, there are weepings and wailings, and for a year everything goes wrong, and whatever happens San Gennaro is naturally held responsible. Poor saint! were he not so jealously guarded and so valuable an asset, he would undoubtedly share the fate of other of his colleagues I know of, who, when they do not do what is expected of them by their worshippers, are, both figuratively and literally, soundly smacked. In certain places the local saint who so ventures to misbehave himself is kicked contumeliously into the sea, only to be withdrawn and replaced in his shrine in the church when he may be supposed to have had time to reflect on his shortcomings and to have repented of them.

Another characteristic Neapolitan festival, although it is accompanied by no "miracle," is that of the Piedigrotta on the 7th September. The Madonna in the church, which stands close to the entrance to the well-known tunnel, is the nominal *raison d'être* of this saturnalia—but I am afraid that not many people in the crowds which make the night hideous with an altogether undescribable din think much about her. The *festa* of the Piedigrotta is exclusively one dedicated to the amusement of the lowest classes of the community, and is, in reality, simply an enormous and rowdy fair without anything specially picturesque about it. One feature it certainly has which is interesting. It is on the night of the *festa* of the Piedigrotta that those popular Neapolitan songs make their début before the public, and in an incredibly short period are whistled and sung at the farthest ends of the earth. As on the night of San Giovanni at Rome, a car containing singers moves slowly through the multitude, halting at certain spots in order to sing the new songs which have been adjudged worthy of the popular favour. These are listened to with the greatest interest, and it is wonderful how quickly and unanimously the mob discover which among them is destined to live. The pity of it is that many of these really beautiful melodies, full of natural and spontaneous sentiment, speedily become so hackneyed, and so maltreated by the innumerable companies of sham Neapolitan singers which pervade the world, that their charm soon vanishes, to be replaced by distaste.

One would imagine that the composer of some of these songs which have become popular in all the quarters of the globe would receive a handsome income—but not a bit of it! Twenty or thirty francs has hitherto been as much as one of these songs has been worth to its maker. And here we are confronted by a little piece of German enterprise which is only one among countless examples of how our Teutonic friends are gradually exploiting every hole and corner of the Italian market, no matter what the nature of the goods may be that markets produce. Within the last few months a German syndicate has discovered that there is money to be made out of these Neapolitan songs — a fact which the Italian musical publishers have never been clear-headed enough to perceive. Instead of paying the composers of these songs a miserable sum of a few francs, and discouraging them to continue their efforts, this German publishing company has succeeded in getting the best known and most successful of the song-writers to contract with them for a certain number of years for a supply of new *canzoni napoletani* yearly — paying not twenty or thirty francs promiscuously, but two thousand francs yearly to each composer during the term of contract. The world at large, therefore, if it wishes in the future to listen to the prize-winning Neapolitan songs of the year, will have to pay for the privilege of doing so, and to pay—not Naples, but Leipzig or Dresden. I am not quite certain whether this arrangement has been finally accomplished, but I am assured on good authority that it has been so.

CHAPTER XI

A CHAPTER OF DIGRESSIONS

I SUPPOSE that it is a matter of temperament, but, to my mind, one of the many advantages which Naples possesses over Rome lies in the fact that one does not feel that oppression of the past from which in the last-named city it is difficult entirely to free oneself. There is nothing melancholy or depressing about Naples; and though her middle-past, if I may coin such an expression, contains tragedies enough and horrors enough to satisfy the most ardent seeker after such things, they never intrude themselves so aggressively as does the oppressive weight of dead empire and living theocracy at Rome. Even in her most tragic times, the times of the Anjou, Aragon, and Bourbon reigns, her tragedies were artistically concealed under a mantle of carelessness, gaiety, and brilliancy very different from the barbaric splendour which only brought the brutality of ancient Rome into greater relief, or from the hypocritical mask of religion under which the usurpers of the throne of the Cæsars—the medieval Popes—strove to conceal their rascalities. No doubt, as I say, this is all a mere matter of personal temperament, and I am quite aware that I am in the vast minority in regarding Rome and the Roman Campagna as the most melancholy and depressing place on the face of God's earth — a place in which one is at every step confronted by object-lessons in the vanity of all human things under the sun, and in the vanity, too, of a purely human institution which pretends to possess a divine origin.

At Rome the further one permits thought and imagination to recede into the past, the uglier are the visions of blood and lust, of violence and aggression that confront one. The very beginning of things is fratricide, and a particularly base and treacherous form of fratricide at that! At Naples, on the other hand, the further imagination strays into the remote past, the more gracious and poetical does that past appear. This, no doubt, is due simply to the fact that the origin of things, so far as all practical purposes are concerned, is Greek and not Latin. We may, if we please, to use a vulgarism, get behind the tragic centuries of Naples and Sicily and find ourselves living in the spirit in an age of beauty, luxury, and refinement such as the coarser-minded and more brutal Romans never knew. And, indeed, it is the brutality of Rome which even to this day casts a blot on the fairness of this lovely shore, a blot more ineffaceable than those caused by all the later iniquities of Spanish and French tyrants.

Ahead of us, as we leave Piedigrotta and Posilipo behind us and make our way down the hill to Pozzuoli lies Baia and the Capo Miseno, can one ever gaze at them across the blue waters without

Photo] [Alinari.

CAPRI.

a ghastly vision rising in one's minds—the scene of the murder of Agrippina by her son? Often have I sat by the castle of Baia in the warm glow of a summer evening and conjured up the whole scene: the stately imperial galley escorting the empress from the banquet at which Nero had entertained her, to her villa by the Lucrine Lake; the grim moment when the luxurious vessel, gliding softly over the still waters of the bay to the sound of music and the measured sweep of oars, was riven asunder as though by magic; and then the epilogue in the villa itself—the final consummation of that crime, the monstrosity of which has rung down through the ages. No — decidedly this lovely coast owes nothing to Rome save unpleasant associations!

There is Capri, too, beautiful as a dream, and inhabited by a good-looking and good-natured population to boot, which even Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic tourists have been unable altogether to spoil—an island of almost perpetual summer—over which hang, like a lurid pall, the terrible traditions connected with Tiberius. I for one, however, will not allow Tiberius to spoil my wanderings about Capri, for I altogether discredit the tales concerning his appalling deeds of cruelty and unbridled lust. It was assuredly not necessary for a Roman emperor to leave Rome in order to indulge to his heart's content in both the one and the other; and the fact that the poor old gentleman chose Capri as a retreat in which to escape from the moral and political atmosphere of his capital does not seem to me to point to anything but good in him. No doubt he amused himself on Capri, as many other lesser individuals have done before and since his day; and some of the diversions of even the best among the Cæsars do not, I suppose, commend themselves to strict moralists. After all, the charges against Tiberius, and the tales told concerning his life on Capri, rest almost entirely on the very doubtful word of that arch-scandal-monger Suetonius, whom recent research has detected in many a calumny. It is certainly unlikely that a man who proved himself to be so conscientious and fair-minded a ruler should have become in his old age the monster of iniquity which history and tradition has until recently made him out to be. If he were so, then he must have become suddenly insane in his latter years—struck by that strange epileptic insanity which, though common to the Cæsars of the Julian dynasty, was completely unknown in the Claudian family to which Tiberius belonged.

But the whitewashing of Tiberius would be a calamity for the Caprioti—for who would come any more to look at the famous *salto* whence the tyrant caused his victims to be flung hundreds of feet down into the sea, while men were stationed in boats below to beat out the brains of any poor creature who happened to rise to the surface alive after his plunge? And who would listen any more to the tales of the boatmen and the fishermen of the island? I listen to the tales with the greatest interest, and apologise mentally to the shade of the calumniated emperor, while I believe in them just as much as I believe in those other

Photo] [Alinari.

ROCKS AT CAPRI.

tales concerning the Madonna and the saints with which they are often varied—but not as much as I do in those older legends which are scornfully dismissed as pagan by the cocksure Christian, though they usually contain not a few sparks of the divine truths of Nature.

One should not, I suppose, discourse of Capri without mentioning the Blue Grotto. Here, if anywhere, is a spot of pure beauty, unrivalled in its own particular way. I am thankful to say I have always had the good fortune to visit it at hours when the tourists frequent it not, and this, assuredly, should be the endeavour of every one who would fully realise its magic spell. I find that the general impression concerning this wonderful sea cave is that it is a relic as classical as the rocks of the Sirens or as Scylla and Charybdis. Even in the days of Imperial Rome, however, the blueness of the Grotto was non-existent, for the simple reason that the level of the sea has considerably altered since those times. A cave, no doubt, existed, probably when Tiberius fixed upon Capri as a pleasant place for his *villeggiatura*; but the entrance to it must have been so small as to have prevented that flow of light from without, the refraction of which causes its lovely colour. Tradition, of course, points to a secret passage said to lead to one of the several palaces of the emperor, and tradition is probably right, since in times of danger such a means of escape to the sea would have been very useful.

It is strange that all through the Middle Ages, and down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the existence of the Blue Grotto was practically unknown to the world. It is supposed that the fishermen of the island always knew of its existence, but nothing would induce them to enter it, since it was said to be haunted by demons and by fearful sea monsters who carried off the unwary into its recesses, whence they never again emerged. Of course a German went and discovered it—one Kopisch. He had listened to the local legends cencerning it, and, like a sensible man, he set himself to work to discover what foundation there might be for them, instead of dismissing them with a smile, as some superior Englishmen had doubtless done many a time before him. This was in the year 1826, and as any one who wishes may read his own account of his discovery, written in German, but not, I think, translated into any other tongue, I need not reproduce it here.

The tales told by the fishermen concerning the Grotto are many and wonderful, and even now, notwithstanding the proverb of familiarity breeding contempt, some of these legends are at least partially believed in. I once tried my best to get some boatmen to take me into the Grotto before sunrise, thinking that it would be interesting to watch the effect of the dawn and observe the changes the light would undergo until it reached the perfect blue which we all know. Bribe as I might, I could not find a single man who would undertake the matter. They had not the slightest objection to take me anywhere else throughout the summer night, but into or near the Blue Grotto they would not go before the sun was up. I do not know whether this would be the experience of

Photo *[Alinari.*

MARINA DI CAPRI.

any one wishing to gratify his curiosity at that hour when most people are content to be in their beds. Indeed, I heard afterwards that some strange sea monster had been haunting the bit of coast in question, possibly a large shark or whale, and this may have temporarily aroused the superstitious objections of the boatmen.

I am told that Capri has a little society of its own in the shape of a cosmopolitan foreign colony of which the principal element is German. I have no acquaintance with it, and the society in which I have moved in Capri has always been that of the people. I have an idea that this last is really the best society in the island, and that it is also the most interesting; but, of course, I only judge by what the Caprioti have themselves told me concerning the *signoria straniera.*

Capri, Sorrento, Castellamare—the very names stand for all that is beautiful, even in Italy. As to the last, it is certainly the least attractive of the three, the town itself being a far from pleasant one, and its inhabitants far from edifying in their manners. "Surriento," as it is called in native parlance, is a very different matter. Facing northward, and shaded by the great mass of Monte Sant' Angelo, it is an ideal place in which to spend the summer and autumn months. I am not going to describe its scenery, for no pen could do justice to it. Neither, for that matter, can any brush. The lovely lights on land and sea are so constantly changing as to be a despair to any one attempting to seize and transfer their effects to print or canvas. The whole of the Sorrento district is singularly rich in legends, and in many of these it is easy to recognise old pagan friends reappearing in Christian guise. There are individuals, called the Janara, who perform malicious acts after nightfall—witches, in fact, of whom there is an abundance in these parts, as we have seen that there were formerly at Lezzeno on the Lake of Como. Then there are evil spirits, which can only be kept out of the peasants' dwellings by filling a jar full of water and placing it outside the entrance.

In Scotland, of course, these spirits would be fairies, and the jars of water would be represented more poetically by the two familiar rowan trees which one may see planted at the wicket of many a Highland cottage. Indeed, the magic folklore of the North is far more poetical than its counterpart in Italy. Those delightful creations, the "little people," are altogether absent from it, and this, as I think, is a very unfortunate loss. They are replaced by far grimmer folk.

I have a theory of my own to account for the difference between the attitude towards the supernatural of the Northern as compared with the Latin races; and though I am quite aware that there are several great flaws in my theory, I believe that there may also be some truth in it. It is very certain that, although the peasants in certain parts of Italy believe in evil spirits, they do not believe, and the Italian in general does not believe, in what we know as ghosts. It is extremely rare to find in Italy a house which has the reputation of being permanently haunted, and the average Italian is politely incredulous when one of even the best authenticated English, Scottish, or German ghost stories is related to him.

"Confound the man!" I hear Brown saying, as he turns over the leaves of this book at his club, "he jumps about from Sorrento to Scotland, and from one subject to another, in the most annoying manner"—and I fear that more important critics than Brown will say the same thing! But I cannot help it if they do. My Italian year is made up of digressions; and so I should not be faithful to my subject were this volume not to be made up of them likewise.

But to return to the ghosts. It is, as I have said, not easy to find a permanently haunted house in Italy, though there are a few scattered here and there which bear that reputation. It frequently happens, however, that houses are suddenly subject to strange manifestations which cannot be accounted for in any normal way—such as furniture being mysteriously moved, bedclothes being forcibly torn away in the dead of night, and so on. Not long ago a case of this kind occurred in the house of a family well known to me in a small Tuscan town. A death had occurred some months previously, and quite suddenly a room in the house became impossible to occupy on account of the noises which were heard in it. Objects placed on tables fell to the floor for no apparent reason, and repeatedly, during the night, those who occupied the bedroom adjoining it were awakened by the bedclothes being violently wrenched away and hurled to another part of the room. First of all the Carabinieri were called in, but their most searching investigations could make nothing of the matter. Then the priests were summoned to exorcise what was reluctantly supposed to be a spirit; but even the powers of the Church were unable to put a stop to the proceedings. One of the sons of the said family—a very great friend of mine—was absent at the time doing his military service in Rome; but he obtained leave to go home for a few days, and determined to investigate the matter for himself. Utterly sceptical as to the supernatural nature of the manifestations, he slept in the room on the night of his arrival, his only companions being a revolver and a thick stick, both of which he was in every way capable of using with effect. Of course he neither saw nor heard anything, nor were his slumbers disturbed by any disarrangement of the bedclothes. The manifestations promptly ceased, nor have they ever since been renewed. That they certainly had occurred almost nightly for several weeks could not be doubted; but by what human agency they were caused remained a mystery.

To return to my theory; I believe that, previous to the Reformation, there are very few instances of ghost stories to be found in either our own country or Germany. A belief in evil spirits of course there always was; but not in the reappearance of departed friends and relatives, or of persons whose troubles or crimes, when alive, caused them to haunt the places where these had occurred. The religion of the masses in those times provided so completely for belief in the supernatural, by the perpetual recurrence of miracles and of apparitions of the Virgin and the saints, that there can have been little necessity for supernatural manifestations of a less sacred character. Now, among Northern peoples the faith in these things, and the possibility of their occurrence, was quickly swept away by the Reformation and the teachings of Protestantism. I do not think it is too much to assume that this deprivation of belief in the more sacred forms of supernatural manifestations gave rise to a necessity to supplant it by credulity in apparitions of the kind which we know as ghosts, and in other forms of the supernatural such as in later days became, and are still, common only in Protestant countries or among individuals in Catholic countries who have ceased to believe in Catholic doctrine as taught by the Latin and Greek Churches. I advance my theory with all reserve; but I think it would be an interesting task to ascertain precisely the period when ghost stories, as we know them, first made their appearance and became credible to the masses —I do not, of course, mean tales concerning spirits, good or evil, but those treating of the reappearance of individuals known to have lived or died in certain places. It is at least a curious coincidence that, in countries practically unaffected by the Reformation, there exists on the whole an utter scepticism as to "ghosts," and a contemptuous disbelief in tales concerning them. Whereas, in those countries in which the principles of the Reformation have most triumphed, there exists a firm and widespread belief in such appearances, which, I think, is not traceable, except as regards isolated cases, to a period anterior to the sixteenth century, and which, if I mistake not, did not gain any real footing in popular imagination until times considerably nearer to our own.

I should like to narrate some of the many bogy tales believed in by the people of Capri and Sorrento; but they have been far better told than I could tell them, and this among others by Mr. Arthur Norway in his delightful book upon Naples.

CHAPTER XII

IN MAGNA GRECIA

THERE is a garden in Naples which for beauty and interest surpasses any other in the world. I am ashamed sometimes to think how much of my time I spend in it during my visits to Naples, and also sorry to think of the many two-franc pieces I spend in order to enter into its fairyland. No doubt my time might be much better employed in studying the wonderful productions of man in the Museo Nazionale—the glorious examples of sculpture, and the priceless collections contained in its galleries and halls. The productions of Nature, however, appeal to me more strongly; and this is why I go a dozen times to my Neapolitan garden for the once that I go to the Museo. Of the garden of the Palazzo Rufolo at Ravello, by which I intend presently to pass, Wagner wrote, "Klingsor's Zaubergarten ist gefunden." I think he might with equal justice have written the same thing of the Aquarium at Naples.

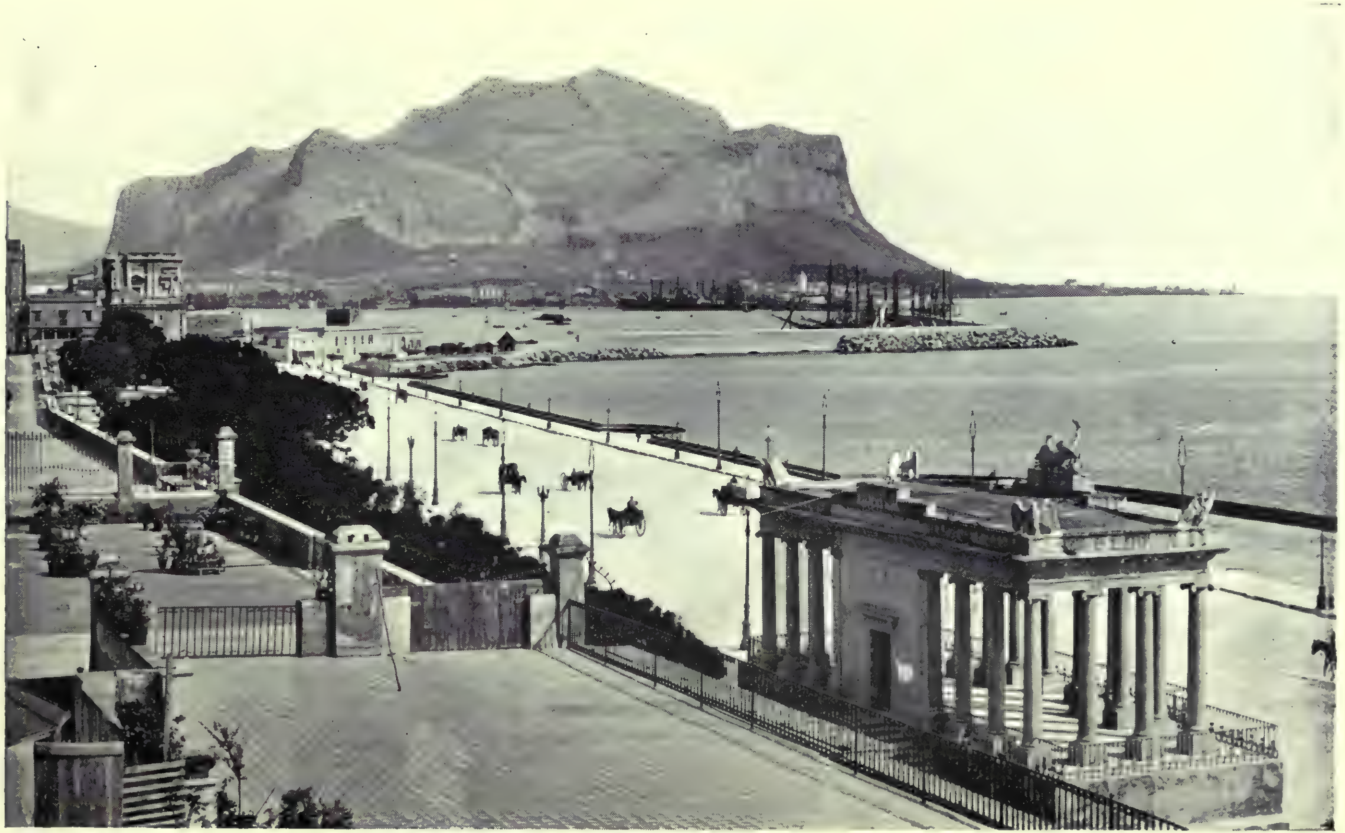
Most aquariums, as we all know, come into that category of frauds best defined as tourist-traps—dank and dreary places where a limited number of specimens of the commonest objects of marine life pass a miserable and unnatural existence, and than which any pool left by the outgoing tide on a rocky coast contains many more attractions. Very different is this veritable museum of the sea, which years of labour and scientific study has formed at Naples. Properly to enjoy its marvellous beauty, the Aquarium should be visited about midday, when the hot rays of the sun are reflected in the depths of the water in the numerous tanks. Then, indeed, one may believe oneself to be wandering in a garden brilliant with the hues of many flowers. And between the flowers there are jewels—living jewels that sparkle and flash in the sunlight, as they form recesses in the rocks, with all the iridescent colours of the opal. The flowers, too, are fairy flowers, and their delicate petals sway gently to and fro with the motion of the water, as though stirred by a summer breeze. You can watch the life of these lovely creatures of the sea; and, watching, the minutes will glide into hours if only you have eyes to see and a heart to understand. It is a very fever of life, too, for all its apparent peacefulness—watchful against any attack, sensitive to the least feathery touch of the tiniest of the animalculæ which may come into contact with it. Then, if you gaze long enough, you may see the sleep of the sea flowers, the folding of their petals, and the gradual fading of their gorgeous colours. There are other creatures—mysterious creations that revolve ceaselessly, weird little sea-horses, things that you think are lifeless tubes of coral until they, also, at the touch of some invisible atom, spring into motion, and shoot out threatening feelers which curl through the water around them.

But the sea has her chamber of horrors as well as her jewelled gardens. In other tanks there are terrible creatures, very devils of the deep. You may look your hardest into a tank, the sides of which are lined with caverned rocks, and believe it to be untenanted. But if by chance one of the *custodi* of the Aquarium should insert, from above, some repulsive-looking matter into the tank, which sinks to the bottom, you will see a sight which will cause you to shiver, so suggestive is it of a fiendish malignity, which has something about it that is uncanny. What you have taken to be a piece of yellow rock suddenly stirs, and with a horrible, gliding motion—subtle, but yet conveying a sense of remorseless power—a great octopus will approach his prey. For an instant the motion is not particularly rapid, and you can see the cruel eyes of the creature gleaming in the water, and the loathsome-looking tentacles waving before it. Suddenly there is a lightning-like rush through the water. The arms wind themselves round their prey, and the filthy white suckers fasten upon it, as the terrible mandibles rend and tear it. These octopi are, of course, small in comparison with the horrible monsters of their kind which haunt the deep; but nevertheless they manage to convey a sense of repulsion and a suggestion of a cold and devilish cruelty, which causes one to turn away from their tank with a shudder of disgust, and to hurry back to the lovely flower-creatures near by.

I often wonder why people should go to church and listen to the theories of priests and parsons about the Creator, when they can study His ways for themselves by intelligently observing His works, and this thought is ever in my mind when I visit the Naples Aquarium. Indeed, I have more than once sought refuge in it after having attended Mass, or listened to some more than usually irritating sermon regarding mysteries of which the preacher, in common with every other created being, past or present, was entirely ignorant; and I have derived the same satisfaction from exchanging human theories for divine facts in the Garden of the Sea at Naples, as when I have fled from a church in England to the banks of a woodland stream.

There are other departments of this marvellous aquarium which, though certainly not beautiful, are extremely interesting; but they are not shown to the public. The upper floors of the building are devoted to laboratories for scientific research, and there is also a "hospital," in which ailing specimens are treated, and tanks in which various specimens are kept until they are required to replace others in the Aquarium itself. On the last occasion, when the Director kindly took me over these departments, I was shown a "patient" in the hospital, who had undergone the operation of having a lost portion of his tail supplied by the process of grafting. He appeared to be quite happy under the circumstances.

The Aquarium is limited to specimens belonging to the waters of the Gulf of Naples; but, since the gulf is peculiarly rich in marine fauna—if this be a permissible expression—of all kinds, it is by no means a deleterious limitation. The institution possesses a yacht of its own, on which deep-sea dredging for specimens is carried out during the summer



Photo] [Alinari.

PALERMO AND MONTE PELLEGRINO.

months, and scientific observations are made. I was once most kindly invited to accompany the Director on one of these cruises, and it is one of the regrets of my life that I was unable to do so, as I could not be in Naples at the time.

Naples, of course, like every other great Italian city, possesses an *alta società* of its own, and a very charming, kindly, and hospitable society it is. It is naturally small, as compared with that of Rome, and it is not cosmopolitan. That, I think, is one of its great advantages. The British and American society adventurer is conspicuous by his absence from the Neapolitan salons; neither, I imagine, would he or she have the slightest chance of being received into them in the same way that the more unconcerned Roman hostesses are apt to receive foreigners. The Neapolitan grande dame very rightly likes to know who a stranger is in his own country before inviting him to meet her friends; but when once she knows that his social position at home warrants her doing so, she will do all in her power to make his stay in Naples pleasant to him.

The great Neapolitan families are all more or less closely related to one another, and also to the Sicilian houses of the same standing. It behoves the stranger, therefore, to be wary; and he will do well not to express any adverse opinion as to any individual he may have happened to meet in society. That, indeed, is a golden rule to observe in any society, large or small; but it is only the unusually clever people who make a point of observing it. I have no intention of making invidious comparisons between Neapolitan and Roman society, since I have received too much kindness and hospitality from both to allow of my doing so, even if I had the mind. All I can say is, that I wish Naples were not so many hours' journey from England and from Tuscany; for, were it nearer, I should certainly spend very much more of my time in it than I am able to do, both in order to renew my pleasant associations with its social life, and to feel myself—in Naples.

The multiplicity of titles in Naples is astounding; marquises, counts, and barons are as plentiful as blackberries in an English hedgerow, while even dukes and princes are not uncommon. The really great houses, of course, have an indisputable right to their titles, and among them are to be found some of the most ancient names and descents that figure in the Almanach de Gotha. What right, if any, the vast majority of the remainder of these *titolati* may have to the handles they are so fond of prefixing to their names, nobody can say. They are to be found in every condition of life; and a cab-driver was pointed out to me, not long ago, who was a marchese, and, I believe, a genuine marchese, the title having been conferred on his grandfather by King "Bomba." In any Neapolitan restaurant one may hear extremely disreputable-looking individuals addressed by the waiters as signor barone or signor marchese.

Needless to say, this species of noble persons stands entirely outside Neapolitan society, which is, I should say, the most exclusive of any in Italy. But, with all its exclusiveness, it is not the least stiff or formal, but quite the contrary, being, perhaps, in reality, the most natural and genuine of any. There is plenty of wealth in Naples among the upper classes, as well as plenty of poverty. Not a few of the *alta nobiltà* possess enormous estates in Calabria and in other parts of Italy. They rarely, with some exceptions, entertain on any large scale; but there are certain Neapolitan houses in which, when they do open their doors, things are as "well done" as in similar great houses in London.

The Court is represented in Naples by the Duke and Duchess of Aosta, the king's first cousins, who reside not at the royal palace, but at the far more attractive one at Capodimonte. Both are immensely popular with the Neapolitans, and with good reason. Their untiring exertions, at the time of the last great eruption of Vesuvius, to bring help and encouragement to the villages overwhelmed by the lava, making their way fearlessly to places which the authorities had declared to be too dangerous to approach, is well remembered. But Italy has become accustomed to see the members of the House of Savoy displaying a quiet and cool courage, and bringing instant relief wherever disaster occurs.

It would take not one but several volumes to describe the many and varied interests to be found in and immediately around Naples, and the variety the city and its surrounding towns and villages offer is one of the reasons why I, personally, prefer it even to Rome. But an Italian year is shorter, I think, than other years, and away over the sea lies Sicily, which must be visited; while the great and, to foreigners, comparatively unknown districts of the Basilicata and Calabria must find some place in these pages. The Gulf of Salerno, too, and the towns which line its shores or nestle under its overshadowing mountains, should be explored by any one who wishes fully to appreciate the charms of Magna Grecia. Most tourists in these parts go to Amalfi, and I suppose that they like it when they get there. To speak frankly, I do not. To my mind it is an odious place, inhabited by a cruel and odious people. I have seen things in Amalfi which I cannot recall without a shudder—acts of barbarity performed in the public streets, passing unheeded and unreproved under the eyes of villainous-looking ecclesiastics, who would close them to any crime, provided that money were forthcoming to purchase absolution. And yet, when in this detestable spot, one cannot help meditating over its past greatness, and thinking of the days when Amalfi and its group of neighbouring cities, now sunk into squalor, was a powerful republic largely dominating the trade between East and West.

It is worth while, however, to go to Amalfi for no other reason than to visit Ravello. This beautiful place, high up among the mountains, was once a flourishing town inhabited by rich merchant princes. It is now not much more than an overgrown village, but a village in which there are some priceless relics of its past. The cathedral, unluckily, has been terribly mutilated, thanks to a certain Bishop of Ravello, who appears to have had an invincible hatred of any form of decorative art. He destroyed nearly everything in his church which had once made it famous, and only isolated objects have escaped his onslaughts to show us how beautiful the whole fabric must have been. But Ravello still contains one of the most fascinating things in all Italy, and this is the Palazzo Rufolo, which centuries ago belonged to a family of merchant princes of that name. Its courtyard, built by the Saracens, as, indeed, was the whole *palazzo* originally, is a dream of daylight. Its gardens—well, what more can I say of them than did Wagner in his sentence that I have already quoted? The view from its terraces over mountains and sea is of a loveliness indescribable, and every point upon which the eye rests has its history or its legend. Far below lie the twin towns of Majori and Minori, nestling in a country carpeted in spring and early summer with wild flowers, and rich in fruits. The picturesque old city of Vietri stands over the sea far away to the left, and from it one may drive up a mountain valley to the high plateau of La Cava, where is a delightful little resort much frequented in summer on account of its fresh and pure air, and which boasts of a comfortable hotel, in which, I must add, the food is, or was, excellent.

Very different in character and habits are the people of these mountain towns and villages from the ruffians of Amalfi and the coast—a gracious and kindly people, at any rate to strangers, and with their behaviour towards each other I have nothing to do. A great charm of all this country is its water. Little rivers and sparkling streams intersect the valleys and the mountain plateau. Far above Cava dei Tirrheni, as the little town is called, lies the abbey of La Cava, surrounded by woods on the mountain side. It was a great place of pilgrimage in the days of the Normans and the Lombards, and here in the library of the monastery are still preserved archives and manuscripts priceless to the historian and the archæologian. Assuredly fame would await a scholar who should devote a few summers to extracting from these archives some consecutive history of those times when Saracens, Normans, and Lombards strove for mastery and to found a dynasty in Southern Italy, thus relieving the bewildered brains of those who have to wrestle with the complicated and disjointed mass of information concerning that far-off but fascinating period at present available. The scholar in question would, of a certainty, pass his summers in a delightful spot and in a delightful climate. I should like—but then, I am not a scholar.

Salerno, too, is well worth visiting, if only for its Duomo. This is very fine in itself, and full of beautiful marbles and works of art. But its chief interest to most people will centre in the tomb of the great Pope Gregory VII. Here he lies, that great and unscrupulous priest who, for ambition's sake, first conceived in his subtle brain the idea of making the kings of the world subservient to the Papacy; who kept the Emperor Henry kneeling in the snow at Canossa, a suppliant to be admitted to a priest's presence, and who in reality brought upon the world the curse of that temporal power of the Vatican which his successor, Innocent IV., whom we have left lying in the Duomo at Naples, finally consolidated.

From Salerno it is easy to visit the great temples

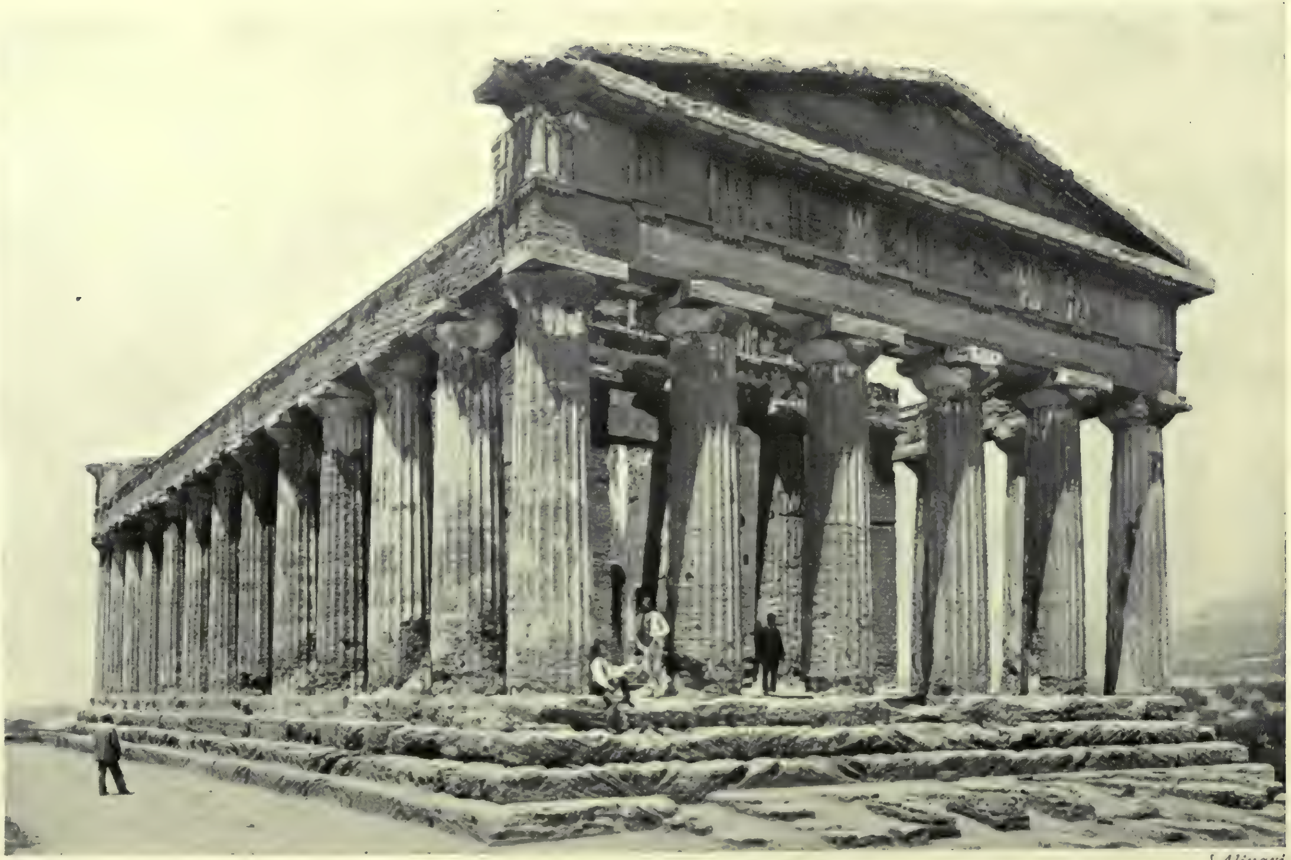


Photo [*Alinari.*

TEMPLE OF POSEIDON, PÆSTUM.

of Pæstum, standing in their magnificent desolation in the midst of a fever-haunted plain. What an object-lesson is here! The daughter of Sybaris, that mighty Greek city in Calabria, the name of which has become synonymous with riches and luxury, Pæstum, or Poseidonia, to give it its true name, was probably nearly as splendid and luxurious as its parent. Of Sybaris not a trace remains above the ground; but of the city of Poseidon these mighty temples bear pregnant witness to the magnificence which once reigned in the midst of this dreary plain, and of the mutability of all things under the sun.

Virgil was here, as every schoolboy knows to his cost; but the roses he sings of are buried in the dust, together with everything else that made the city beautiful. Only the temples remain, rising gaunt and solemn out of the flowering weeds. And even they are stripped of the gorgeous colouring, the gleam of which must have been a welcome sight to the eyes of generations of merchant sailors as they brought their ships to port laden with the precious merchandise of the East. A great silence reigns at Pæstum—a silence of the tomb. It is broken only by the shrilling of innumerable *grilli* in the rank herbage, and by the faint, far-off murmur of the waves breaking on the flat shore. Even at Athens there is nothing so impressive as the Temple of Neptune at Pæstum; and there is certainly no Roman ruin which can in any way vie with it for dignity and grandeur. The last time I visited it I was absolutely alone—only a couple of contadini were visible half a mile away ploughing with their white oxen. I felt as though I had dropped from the sky on to another planet, and I am quite sure that had I seen the temple thronged with its ancient worshippers, and sacrifice being offered to Poseidon, I should not have been the least surprised, though I certainly should not have cared about witnessing the sacrificial rite.

The number of foreigners who penetrate into the Basilicata and Calabria is few indeed, and it is a thousand pities that this in many ways splendid country is so little visited. Accommodation, it is true, even in some of the larger towns, leaves much—and sometimes everything—to be desired; and, as in Sardinia, those who wish to be spared discomfort must arm themselves with letters from some of the great Calabrian landowners who spend most of their year in Naples to their fattori and to the local authorities, such as the prefects and mayors. The general idea of this heel of Italy is that it is a savage land, poor and desolate, and inhabited by an altogether undesirable people. Even Italians are apt to look surprised if one suggests any such strange thing as an excursion into Calabria. And yet, were it not for the abominableness of the railroads, there are many parts of Calabria especially which are as delightful as any to be found not only in Italy but in Europe. Every kind of climate is obtainable, from that in which one swelters two-thirds of the year in a semi-tropical heat to that in which even in July and August one may breathe the freshest of mountain and sea air, and be glad enough of a blanket or two on one's bed at nights.

Some of the great feudal families in these parts possess not only estates which elsewhere would be principalities, but they are also possessed of great wealth in comparison with that of large landowners in other districts of Italy. It is very difficult to know how wealthy a family may be in Calabria; for, with the exception of the great nobles who visit their estates rarely, the scale of living is to all appearances the same in all households, even in those belonging to the upper bourgeoisie and the *petite noblesse.* This scale of living is simple in the extreme, and devoid of any display which costs money. The contadini of the estate act as servants, and the fattorie supply the family with all the necessaries of everyday life except clothes. The consequence is that there are no tradesmen's bills to meet, no useless or idle servants to maintain, and a man who begins life with a very small capital may increase it yearly owing to the happy accident that, whatever his social status, nobody expects him to spend his income on any outward display of luxury or comfort.

The country as a whole is immensely fertile, and not only fruit and corn but also extensive pasturage exists on most of the large properties, while even the smallest of a few acres, of which there are a vast number, yield in any average year valuable crops. Brigandage, once the scourge of these districts, has practically ceased to exist, and the traveller is as safe here as in any other part of Italy—and, perhaps, safer than some in the immediate neighbourhood of Rome, where amateur brigands are not altogether unknown. The people, too, though often rough, are harmless and obliging, very sober and industrious, and far more moral than those of Campania.

It is not, perhaps, very generally known that in Calabria there exist to this day pure Greek colonies, the origin of which is lost in the mist of ages. Two of these number a considerable population. They live entirely apart from the Italian community, and speak of the Italians as "Latinoi." Their Greek tongue, I am assured, has little in common with modern Greek, and is probably identical with that spoken at Constantinople in the Byzantine age; but it would appear to be an entirely unwritten language, and I believe that no sentence of it exists in print. The percentage of those unable to read or write is still enormous in this heel of Italy. Even now, on very many estates large and small accounts are never kept, simply because figures would imply nothing either to the peasant or his employer. Nevertheless, there is more honesty in this part of Italy than in any other, and the fattori in Calabria are proverbial for their strict integrity.

It seems strange in these days when it is the fashion to be democratic—from a dread, I suppose, of being considered to be "behind the times"—to think that not a hundred years has passed since the feudal system was abolished in Southern Italy. It was long before any of the Calabrian towns possessed municipal rights; and the great feudal families were practically reigning sovereigns over their possessions. Much of the feudal tradition still clings to the more remote portions of Calabria; and, indeed, there are places in which life has not greatly changed from what it was in the Middle Ages. I have a shrewd suspicion that in these places the poorer and more humble members of the community are far happier and better off than they would be did they insist on benefiting by all those rights of citizenship which a democratic and enlightened age has given them. But this suspicion, no doubt, is born of that dislike of and distrust for democracy which I am benighted and unfashionable enough to entertain.

The Calabresi are an intensely patriotic people, and even the priests have set a good example in that way, since they are not as a rule by any means disposed to accept the pretensions of the Vatican in civil matters. Many of them in the days immediately preceding the revolution against the Bourbon dynasty lost their heads on the scaffold rather than obey the papal instructions to use their influence in favour of that most nefarious institution. Both in Calabria and the Basilicata, the sale of the enormous tracts of land acquired by the Church, which was carried out by the newly formed Italian Government between the years 1870 and 1875, caused a great financial crisis from which these districts are only now recovering. These lands were largely bought up by small proprietors on a system of partial payments extending over eighteen years. That was on the face of it an excellent plan. But interest of 6 per cent. was charged on all unpaid amounts, whereas the land itself in those days of indifferent or ignorant farming often did not return a profit of more than 2 per cent., and sometimes not as much. Many purchasers were in the end unable to meet their liabilities to the Government, and properties were put up to sale a second time without finding buyers. The consequence was that much of the land acquired, often by very fraudulent means, by the Church, and rightly confiscated by the new Government, was heavily mortgaged to meet the liabilities undertaken with its purchase; and this has been the cause of much of the poverty of the South and its inability to progress as fast as other portions of United Italy. A new order of things, however, has dawned; and there are not wanting signs that in the not remote future the Basilicata and Calabria will perhaps rival the north of the Italian peninsula in financial prosperity.

CHAPTER XIII

PALERMO AND THE MAFFIA

ONE passes from one scene of beauty to another in this marvellous land which once was Magna Grecia, and assuredly not the least beautiful is that which Palermo presents when approached from the sea. For hours the vast mass of Monte Pellegrino has been visible, looming blue on the horizon; and gradually the whole lovely sweep of the Golden Shell—the Conca d'Oro—in which the white city lays lapped comes into view. It is a wonderful panorama. The town is encircled by this great, fan-shaped garden which stretches away into the shadow of the mountains—a plain so rich in flowers, fruits, and vegetation of all kinds that it has no rival certainly in Europe, if in the world. It is curious that whereas the whole of Southern Italy and Sicily is full of the traditions and relics of ancient Greece, Palermo alone should lack them. Neither is the city named by any Greek historian, except in the vaguest and most casual manner. But Palermo has no need of the classic ages. The Phœnicians colonised her, if, indeed, they did not found her; and to them succeeded the Saracens, who brought to her a beauty and a civilisation which, though not Greek, was almost more glorious.

The Moors entered Sicily about the year 827, and in 831 they made Palermo their Sicilian capital. Their rule, and that of the Norman and Germanic dynasties which succeeded them, was the golden age for the island. If they brought with them all the splendid luxuries of the East, they also brought a wise and just government; and even after the lapse of a thousand years it may with truth be said that Sicily owes much of her beauty, and perhaps all her fertility, to the wisdom and energy of a race accustomed for centuries to the art of turning barren wildernesses into fertile and well-watered gardens.

Then came that wonderful romance of the House of Hauteville—the Norman country gentlemen of Cotentin who became, as if by magic, sovereigns of the wealthiest and most prosperous island in the world. A Pope brought them there, after they and their Northmen had sacked Rome and threatened the Vicar of Christ in St. Peter's chair; and a Pope was afterwards to crush and expel the proud imperial House which sprung from them, thereby setting back the civilisation of Europe for well-nigh six centuries, and plunging the whole of Southern Italy into untold miseries until another adventurer in a red shirt sailed stealthily out of a Ligurian port with his thousand volunteers to bring her freedom. What a family were those old Hautevilles! Only to read of them stirs the blood—and especially Northern blood. That three sons of a Norman squire should have become respectively Count of Apulia, Duke of Calabria, and Count of Sicily proves what a race they must have been.

The last of the three, however, was the strongest man; for he it was who added the crown of Sicily to his brothers' conquests and left his son a monarch.

That son, the second Roger, and his son and grandson all ruled over the kingdom of the two Sicilies. Their Court was that rather of Oriental sultans than of Western princes, for they absorbed and continued most of the traditions of the Moors, whom they had vanquished. Then the male line became extinct, and the rule of Sicily passed through the Hauteville heiress, Constance, who had married the emperor, Henry VI., to the House of Hohenstauffen and the great emperor, Frederic II. That Roger II. must have been an extraordinary man. He cared little for acquiring mouldering relics of supposed saints, a form of corpse-worship which had assumed the proportions of a passion in those days, and which, oddly enough, exists even in ours. While Popes and Princes were selling old bones to each other, and inventing pedigrees for them, King Roger was making his Court at Palermo the centre of the learning and art of the world, and building some of the most lovely fabrics to be found in it. Fortunately for posterity, he turned his back upon Christian tradition and went for his inspirations to the Arab philosophers and architects whom he summoned to his court. The exquisite Cappella Palatina which he founded, and the glorious Cathedral of Monreale blazing in all the richness of their wonderful mosaics, show of what nature these inspirations were. The shape of these churches is, no doubt, a concession to that faith to which the Hautevilles officially belonged; but the spirit of them, and the art, are essentially born of quite another.

His successor, Frederic of Hohenstauffen, was even less orthodox than Roger, and scarcely troubled himself to conceal his sympathies for the Moslem faith. Perhaps it was natural, since from the representative of Christ he received nothing but deadly hatred and the most despicable of treachery. But while Europe was plunged in barbarism, and while the Papacy was fairly launched upon that course of imposture and aggression which has lasted down to our own times, Frederic II. alone held aloft the torch of learning and the principles of good government according to his lights; and to his influence, perhaps, may be traced the origin of the Renaissance which, through the civilising influences of art, was destined to bring about the refinement of Europe. But the forces of superstition and the insatiable ambition of the Popes were too strong. The great and enlightened House of Hohenstauffen fell before the intrigues of the Papacy, and the Pope bestowed their kingdom upon the detestable race of Anjou. From that moment the golden age of Sicily ceased. To the Anjou dynasty succeeded that equally detestable one of Aragon; while to this, again, succeeded that "negation of God," the Bourbon rule.

For six centuries, owing to the hatred of a priest, Sicily was plunged into a succession of the most cruel tyrannies at the hands of foreign rulers, from which the high-spirited race in vain attempted to escape by countless revolutions. I have dwelt upon the history of the island at some length, though it is, or ought to be, well known to every schoolboy. I have done so, however, with an object; for it is only by remembering the past history of Sicily that one may hope to understand an important factor in Sicilian life which yet remains as the direct consequence of the long centuries of tyranny and misgovernment to which the Sicilians were exposed.

Unlike Naples, Palermo affords few "sights" to the stranger within her gates. The Cappella Palatina, the Cathedral at Monreale, the usual national museums and galleries, these fairly exhaust the list. Neither does the city contain much that is of any great historical interest, nor anything at all, as I have said, of classical interest. But the yellow city by the sea is a perpetual sight of beauty in herself, and in the languorous Sicilian climate one is a little thankful that there is only a limited amount of stereotyped sight-seeing. It is sufficient to wander through the streets and observe the characteristics of the population, and to drive through the parks and into the country of the Golden Shell, inhaling the soft, milky air fragrant with the scent of lemon and orange-blossom, and dreaming of the past splendours of the place in the days of the Saracens, the Hautevilles, and the Hohenstauffens.

One thing will strike an Englishman in his wanderings about Palermo with some surprise, and that is the number of admirably turned out carriages and fine horses owned by the Palermitans. This has always been a feature of the place; and though at Palermo there is a considerable number of very wealthy people, and the Palermitan nobility includes some of the oldest and best-known families in Italy, the possession of a smart equipage in which to drive about the city at the fashionable hours by no means implies riches on the part of its proprietor. As in Naples, and also, indeed, in Rome, many a family lives in the most uncomfortable manner, and even stints itself in the necessaries of life in order to be able to make a show in public in its carriage and pair. Of late years motor-cars have, of course, taken the place of horses; but, apart from "blague," the Sicilian takes a real pride in his horses, and even now one sees unusually fine specimens of horse-flesh, well groomed and cared for, in the streets of Palermo.

Some of the villas and palaces owned by the great Sicilian nobles and the representatives of *la haute commerce* are extremely beautiful, and most sumptuously *montés* in every way. The fashion of going to Rome, however, as the Capital, for the Roman season has to a large extent damaged the social life of Palermo, since the majority of the important Sicilian families now migrate annually to take part in the social doings of the metropolis.

I think that no observer of countenances can walk about Palermo, or indeed any Sicilian town, without being struck by the remarkable look of intelligence and acuteness to be seen on the faces of the Sicilians belonging to every class. I will not say that it is an expression which always inspires trust or confidence; for very often—too often—it inspires precisely the reverse. Nevertheless, in whatever channel it may run, good or bad, a high degree of natural intelligence and brain-power is to be detected in the countenances of the vast majority of the Sicilian race; and it is not surprising that Sicily has furnished a very large proportion of the public men who have conducted the affairs of United Italy. It would appear at first sight to be strange that one of the most vigorous races, and one of the fairest spots in Europe, should have lain for several centuries under the spell of a power as blighting in its influence on all social, moral, and economic development as it is mysterious both in its origin and in its action.

I alluded just now to an important factor in Sicilian life that has been largely determined by the tragedies to which the Sicilians have been subjected in the past. That factor, of course, is the Maffia, to which one's thoughts almost unconsciously turn whenever Sicily is mentioned. The idea generally entertained by foreigners concerning the Maffia, or Mafia—for it may be spelt either way—is that it is a kind of secret society, an organisation existing for the purpose of tyrannising over an ignorant population, and which ruthlessly destroys those who venture to oppose its designs. It is regarded as a species of freemasonry among the lower orders, a body akin to the Camorra of Naples, or to other organised societies having for their scope extortion and violence. Now, as a matter of fact, the Maffia differs in all its most important and characteristic points from any one of these definitions. It is essentially a product of social instinct, and not in the least an organisation of evil-doers or, in the ordinary sense of the term, a secret society. To begin with, it has no written code of laws; probably for the reason that it derives its very existence from the deeply rooted and hereditary determination of the Sicilian of all grades of society to baffle and destroy the law itself whenever he finds himself brought into contact with it.

Baron Franchetti, who was one of the Parliamentary Commissioners appointed by the Government some years ago to inquire into the social and economic conditions of Sicily, thus describes it—

"The Maffia," he says, "is a union of persons belonging to every grade, to every profession, and to every category, who, without possessing any apparent, continuous, or regular tie in common, are nevertheless always united for the furtherance of their reciprocal interests. With every consideration of law, justice, and public morals set aside, it is the medieval sentiment of the individual who thinks that he himself can provide for the care and for the safety of his own person and of his own possessions, by reason of his personal worth and influence, quite apart from any action of the authorities or of the laws."

From the above it will be seen that the Maffia cannot be considered or dealt with as an organised society. It possesses no fixed code of laws, no recognised body of officers, no organs for the propagation of its ideas, and yet there exists no phase of Sicilian life, official or political, rural or urban, commercial, agricultural, or even religious, in which this pernicious moral canker has not established itself. Those persons who are themselves honest and law-abiding citizens not only tolerate the silent tyranny of the Maffia, but, dreading its vengeance, actually assist those whom they know to be *maffiosi* in their efforts to evade and baffle the attempts of the authorities to bring them to justice for some delinquency. Illicit gain is, doubtless, one of the primary objects the *maffioso* has in view—and in this, it is true, he does not greatly differ from the associate of any other criminal body. It is this, too, the most sordid and vulgar factor in the Maffia, which has caused casual observers to confound it with the Neapolitan Camorra. The two, however, have in reality little or nothing in common; and the Sicilian *maffioso* would never demean himself to stoop to the mean and petty villainies committed by the Neapolitan Camorrista.

Besides the object of acquiring money by fraud or violence, and sometimes by both, the *maffioso* has other scopes, less sordid, perhaps, but equally perilous to a civilised community. He regards himself as the supreme dispenser of justice in all matters which he may consider to affect himself and his dealings with his neighbour. It follows, as a matter of course, that his object here is to prevent, by fair means or foul, the interference of the civil authorities with his acts, whatever these acts may be; and neither will he tolerate any such interference. His neighbour, whom he has probably wronged, and may not improbably kill, is the first to assist him in defeating the power of the law, for the simple reason that this neighbour is himself a *maffioso.* If the said neighbour be killed, his family will effectually screen the murderer from justice. But it will bide its time, and at a convenient season some member of it will avenge the murder or the wrong in his or her own way. To seek reparation at the hands of the law for any wrong, however grave, and not to throw every obstacle in the way of the law to prevent it interfering in the matter, would be contrary to the honour of a *maffioso.*

In the outskirts of Palermo, in the hot glare of a summer afternoon, a mother stood anxiously awaiting the return of her soldier son from his term of military service. She knew he was to reach home that day, and, as the hour approached at which he had told her she might expect him, she walked along the lane which led into the high road from the city. Presently she saw the lad—he was barely three-and-twenty—coming towards her. She hurried forward to meet him, but before she could embrace him he was laid dead at her feet by a shot fired from behind a fence bordering the lane. The wretched mother's despair and agony may be imagined. The boy was her favourite son, and he had come back to her after three years' absence with the colours, to be foully murdered at the moment of their reunion. Her cries were overheard by the neighbours, and in a very short time the authorities were on the spot to investigate the matter. What was the attitude of the mother in the presence of the authorities of the law? Far from assisting the Carabinieri and other officials in their efforts to trace the murderer, this woman, distracted by grief and horror as she was, did all in her power to baffle the police and throw them off the scent. She swore by the souls of her dead that she knew nothing, had seen nothing, and called upon all the imaginary inhabitants of heaven to witness that she was speaking the truth. Her son, she declared, had not an enemy in the world; there was not a person against whom she could harbour the slightest suspicion of a desire to harm him. Expostulations, appeals to her maternal love, even threats of punishment should she continue to withhold what she knew, were of no avail. She knew—nothing! She had heard the report of a gun and had seen her son fall. More than this could not be extracted from her even in the genuine bitterness of her grief.

Weeks passed, and both the murderer and the motives for the crime remained undiscovered and unsuspected by the local authorities, and in time investigation grew slack, and gradually ceased altogether. At last, after some months, another murder was committed, almost on the same spot as the preceding one. Another young man was shot dead by a *sparatina*, as such murders by gunshot are euphemistically termed in Sicily. This time, however, the murderer was identified. He was another son of the taciturn mother, a younger brother of the lad who had fallen dead at her feet a few months previously. The authorities naturally concluded that the second victim was the murderer of the first. They taxed the mother with being fully aware of it, and of having incited her younger son to avenge his brother's murder by perpetrating a second. In vain they urged her to confess, pointing out that if she could show that her son committed the crime to avenge a brother's death the jury would certainly grant extenuating circumstances, and his punishment would not be so severe. The mother, however, absolutely denied that the murdered man was the murderer of her son. During her examination before the magistrates she swore by all that was most sacred that he was a perfect stranger to her. When she saw that the court did not believe her denials, she feigned illness and became delirious. In this carefully studied delirium she murmured vague and disjointed accusations against various persons—but no surnames, only Christian names ever passed her lips, and these, of course, could not be taken as indicating any particular individual. The boy-murderer supported his mother's statements, and though every one in the court knew that he had killed his brother's assassin, no confirmation of the fact could be extorted by either mother or son, and the boy was sentenced to the full penalty for premeditated murder without benefit of *circostanze attenuanti.*

This is a true tale, which occurred not very many years ago, and others similar to it are constantly occurring. It reveals the power of the Maffia to preserve its influence over its followers even in moments of the most bitter personal grief or indignation. Moreover, it reveals this in a very special manner, for the love of Sicilian women for their children is apt to assume forms which become passionate, and even animal-like, and it is often actually ferocious in its manifestations. It has been proved fairly conclusively that the influence of the women contributes to an enormous extent towards the keeping alive of the spirit of the Maffia. The Sicilian woman of the middle and lower classes has an almost unlimited pride in her person, her position, and her name. The humblest woman of the people, after performing her household duties, will go for her walk in the town, well-dressed and often bejewelled, assuming for the time the deportment of a fine lady. The greatest slattern among maid-servants would not condescend to be seen in the streets carrying a basket or a parcel. When she goes to market—in Sicilian dialect a *vucceria* —she engages a *vastoso*, a porter, to carry her purchases for her to her employer's house.

No greater offence can be offered to a Sicilian woman of the people than to give her credit for being simple or straightforward. It is tantamount to calling her a fool. Her subtlety is her proudest possession, and she values it more than even her personal appearance. She has the profoundest contempt for any member of the male sex whom she suspects of being of a gentle disposition; and what is called a *botta di Maffia*—*i.e.* some savage or desperate act on the part of a man, is the surest road to her esteem and affection. In the lowest classes a girl will not marry a young fellow who has the reputation of being respectable and orderly. She prefers to wed an *omo* (*maffioso*) who has been in *collegio* (prison), and who knows how to take the law into his own hands.

The Sicilian girl of the people has at the same time a profound respect for the social *convenances*—such as they are. She lives in constant dread of what people may be saying of her, and therefore she is almost invariably playing a part to keep up appearances. She is most susceptible to love, and when she loves in earnest it is with a passion which is at once blind and morbid. In most cases in this class a marriage is forced on by the girl owing to compromising situations prearranged with her lover. The Sicilian woman, too, has the most exaggerated attachment for her native town or village, and regards any other with withering contempt. A favourite saying among the Palermitan women is: *Pane schittù, e cassarù cassarù*, which, being interpreted, means: "New bread to eat, and a walk up and down the Cassarù," which is the popular name for the fashionable street in Palermo, now called the Corso Vittorio Emanuele.

Expert students of the Maffia among the police declare that the influence upon and participation in it of women may be divided into two principal factors. The first of these regards the surroundings and education of children, and the second her attitude towards the active part of the Maffia—an attitude which we have already seen. In Sicily the woman has remained medieval in her characteristics, and her medievalism is further crossed by a strong strain of African blood. The result is that the fundamental principles observed by a mother in the upbringing of her children are utterly at variance with any civilised ideas of education and morality. Supposing a woman to have a vivacious and overbearing child, it is a source of profound satisfaction to her. She calls it proudly her *maffiosello*, her *malandrino*, and summons her friends to encourage and admire all those naturally depraved actions in the little creature which should be the first to be corrected and restrained. As soon as the child can talk, it is taught that it is unmanly to speak the truth. There is one unpardonable offence which the little one must never commit, under pain of severe corporal punishment, which is never administered but for this cause. The child must never, under any circumstances, speak to outsiders of what is said and done in the family circle. As the child grows older, the mother teaches it to have a scrupulous regard for social appearances, and to practise the art of deceit in every possible manner. It learns to flatter the rich, and to despise and injure the poor, while at the same time it is gradually trained to witness the most brutalising and degrading details of life. It is taught that in order to live in the world as a man should live, physical force and moral cunning are the two most necessary possessions; and all orderly methods of life—all scruples of honour, pity, or fair-dealing are sneered at as being unworthy and cowardly. I am, of course, speaking solely of the methods employed by women belonging to the lower classes—but not, it is necessary to say, to the lowest class only. The mothers of the upper class are extremely particular in all that relates to the education and training of their families.

The Maffia, out of regard for women as a useful element in life, protects even while it degrades and subjugates her. Her stubborn silence can be relied upon. *Pipa* (silence!) is her word of command—and she will keep it in the face of death itself. *Calate giunco ca passa la chiene* is a favourite proverb of the women connected with the *maffiosi*, which may be most appropriately rendered into English as: "Wait till the clouds roll by." Very instructive are some of these *maffiosi* proverbs in

Sicilian dialect, and some of them I will reproduce here; others I will not, since they are not of a nature fit for publication.

A cu ti leva la pari levacci la vita.—"Whosoever deprives you of the means of existence, deprive of his life." This, perhaps, is legitimate enough, though primitive in idea.

La furca è pri lu poveru, la giustizia è pri lu fissa.—"The gallows are for the poor man, and the law is for the weak man." That is to say, that both punishment and law are only for those who are too poor or too weak to act for themselves.

Vali cchiù n'amicu ncchiazza ca cent'unzi n'sacca.—"An influential friend is worth more than a hundred *onze* (fifty pounds) in the pocket."

Carzori, malatu e nicissità provanu lu cori di l'amici.—"Prison, illness, and want prove the hearts of one's friends."

The above examples of popular sayings are taken from a mass of similar *dicta* which afford some insight into the principles guiding the Sicilian of the working-classes through life. To those who know the character of the people, they are maxims terrible in their cynical contempt for justice as meted out by the law, and full of a savage significance. There is not wanting in many of them a note of pathos and a ring of chivalry towards a companion in distress, which is a distinguishing feature of what is known as *Omertà* in the constitution of the Maffia.

This *Omertà* may be said to be an unwritten code of honour regulating the conduct to be observed by *maffiosi* towards each other and towards the authority of the law. From his earliest youth the Sicilian of the people is trained to consider that every man's hand is against him, and that his hand, therefore, must be ready to be against every man. At the same time, to give any correct definition of *Omertà* is not easy. The expression covers a strange medley of social obligations evolved among a people more than semi-barbarous during the course of long centuries of misgovernment. It is the protest of a race whose strong and gallant spirit has been bent for generations under merciless oppression by foreign princes and priests, but which has never yet been broken. The struggle for self-defence, the hatred and contempt for foreign rule, the bitter experience that law was only a cloak for tyranny and injustice, produced in the Sicilian nature this strange, unwritten code of honour which, although supremely egoistic in its origin, and often depraved in its action, nevertheless can be, and frequently is, the instigator of unselfish and even chivalrous deeds which, notwithstanding the savagery that too often mars them, compel an unwilling admiration and a conviction that their authors are capable of better things could the good that is in them be brought to the surface.

No chapter of human life is so full of complex problems, social and psychological, and of such strange contradictions as that which may be studied in this beautiful Mediterranean island. Love and hatred, avarice and generosity, brutality and chivalry, honour and dishonour—all are to be met with in its pages; and so intermingled are these attributes of humanity that the unprejudiced student of the Maffia, and of its accompanying phenomenon the

Omertà, will wonder to himself what manner of people this may be who can combine some of the noblest of human qualities with the most ignoble acts of worse than bestial cunning and ferocity.

It would be a mistake to assume that the Maffia exists among the lower classes only. There are plenty of *maffiosi* in white gloves, as the Italian metaphor has it, as well as those who do not wear such articles. The *maffioso in guanti bianchi* is a far more despicable creature than his humble colleague, whom he uses as a tool to effect his misdeeds. There are such miscreants in all ranks of Sicilian society, even among the highest. They occupy themselves with politics, parliamentary and political, and with the *haute finance*; but they rely upon the *maffiosi* of less prominent station to carry out their corrupt practices. It has happened many times that these *maffiosi* in kid gloves have found themselves thwarted by some honest official or some personage who refused to lend himself to their schemes. Then murder, foul and treacherous, has been committed, as in the famous case of the Senator Notarbartolo, a Palermitan of noble family and a gentleman above reproach, who was murdered mysteriously—though the mystery was at no time a mystery to those who stood behind the scenes of the actions of the Maffia and its protectors in high places.

There can be no doubt that the power of the Maffia is gradually weakening in the land. Education is progressing, even in Sicily, and the purification of parliamentary and municipal politics will eventually eliminate the swindlers in office who are obliged to resort to the Maffia in order to compass their villainies at the least possible risk to themselves. I have talked with many police officials who happened to be honest men, and with many officers and sub-commissioned officers of the Carabinieri whose honesty I would trust far sooner than I would that of the police, and all seem to be agreed that to eradicate the principles of the Maffia it will be necessary to change the nature of the Sicilian woman of the lower orders. Now, who can change the nature of women? Only, perhaps, the priests on whom women so much rely. It is surely a logical argument against the utility of the priesthood to Italy that in no part of that country, after nearly two thousand years of influence, have they been able to change human nature for the better.

Education, science, secular administration and secular energy—all these things against which the Church has most protested and which she has systematically opposed—have wrought an enormous change for the better in Italy, as in every country in which they have forced the clergy to give way to them. But in Southern Italy, as in every other part in which the influence of the Church predominates among the lower orders, crime, ignorance, and a low level of social conditions go hand in hand with those superstitions which are directly encouraged by men who in the majority of cases well know them to be fables. It is useless to pretend that this is not a fact. It is a fact which is indisputable. Christianity as taught by the priests has been weighed in the balances and found wanting—and this not in Italy alone, though it is in Italy that the proofs are most convincing.

I alluded just now to the police. A most unfortunate system prevails in Italy of recruiting the ranks of this important body from sources which should certainly not be drawn upon for such a purpose. To put it plainly, thieves in Italy are too often set to catch thieves, and the ranks of the police are full of individuals who have the best of all possible reasons for knowing the tactics of criminals. A large proportion of the Forza di pubblica Sicurezza is made up of Neapolitans and Sicilian delegates into whose past it would be better not to inquire. Naples and Palermo swarm with such individuals—and, indeed, Rome and every other city is full of them. Every Italian is perfectly well aware of the fact, and the consequence is that the police as a body enjoy neither the respect nor the confidence of any section of the community. A species of Tammany prevails.

The Carabinieri have hitherto been the one force in Italy which has commanded the respect and confidence of the public; but even the Carabinieri are bitterly complaining of being underpaid and undermanned, and the effect of so mistaken a policy, if continued in, will inevitably lead to individuals joining that corps who are unsuited to its responsibilities. No man may join the Carabinieri who has been at any time condemned for any criminal action, or whose antecedents are not above suspicion. It would be well were similar precautions to be taken in the case of the police. As it is, however, this obvious precaution, to say the least of it, is a very surprising fact.

CHAPTER XIV

ON CLASSIC GROUND

OF all the places in Sicily which carry the mind far back into the past, there is none like Syracuse. It is as well, perhaps, to close one's mind to the present during a stay there, since there is nothing of particular interest in the modern town which has replaced what Cicero described as the greatest of Greek cities and the most beautiful of all cities. Nothing, or next to nothing, remains of that great town which included five others within its walls; nothing but a few columns from some one of the countless temples of the old gods, serving to support the masonry of a Christian church, and the traces of a theatre. It is doubtful whether much more survives beneath the soil, except a network of catacombs; for Syracuse was never a marble city, and the stone of which it must have been built, brought from the gigantic quarries which still exist, is soft in quality and probably perished comparatively quickly under the influence of the moist sea winds.

What a walk, however, is that to Mongibellisi and the hill of Belvedere, near which is the site of the famous Euryalus—pronounced, if you please, with the accent falling on the broad and open *a*!

And what a view is there from this site of tragedy! Far away to the left rises the great snowy mass of Etna out of the plain of Catania, and the eye turns from the sapphire sea to the vivid green of vineyards and fruit gardens. Below us lies the great harbour of Syracuse; but the steamers and sailing vessels lying in the modern port take the place of the triremes and galleys of old. But insensibly one is drawn to the famous Latomia—that place of shame and horrors unspeakable, in which ten thousand of the flower of the Athenians met a lingering death.

It is difficult to realise the tragedy of the spot now. The scene is so peaceful—just an immense quarry some hundred feet or more in depth, its sides festooned with creepers and gay with wild flowers, and overhead the deep blue Sicilian sky. Orange trees laden with golden fruit adorn it; fig trees, lentisk, cystus, and the caper-plant cling to its jagged rocks, while among the ivy and the acanthus are gleams of vivid red, like drops of blood—the blossom of the pomegranate. Swifts wheel screaming around and above it, and from the undergrowth comes the song of nightingales. And yet here an army died—not gloriously on the field of battle, but slowly, hopelessly, under the fierce rays of a Southern sun—the best of the gracious manhood of Greece, fair youths who sat at the feet of Socrates, athletes fresh from the triumphs of the Athenian stadium, artists and philosophers—all condemned to die inch by inch of hunger and thirst under the mocking eyes of the Syracusans.

It is a tragedy which has rung down the ages, and there is none in any way comparable to it. Thucydides has described it in vivid language, so why should I attempt to do so? I think I would fain forget it as I linger in this lovely spot—but it will not be forgotten. The stillness is intense. No breath of air penetrates the recesses of this awful sepulchre to stir the hanging creepers. But in the bare places the sun beats on the yellow rocks, and one thinks of the days when there were no creepers, nor any vegetation to soften its rays by day or to catch one drop of moisture by night—when the great quarry was bare and barren, and the cruel yellow stone glared pitilessly through the long hours of the light, perchance to give out an icy coldness before the dawn of another day of such despair and misery as never had its equal in the history of human woe.

Sicily is still, as it was in the classic times, a granary of the Mediterranean, and nearly half of its total acreage is cultivated for various kinds of cereals. Around the slopes of Etna, and in other parts in the interior, there is also a considerable quantity of pasture land—and in these districts the shepherds form a race apart, wandering with their flocks, of which they are very often the owners, from place to place, and possessing their own habits and customs, and, practically, their own laws. The condition of the peasants has in very recent years materially improved, not only economically but also morally, and in both respects there was certainly much need for improvement. Military service, as usual, is quite as much and perhaps more responsible for this improvement than legislation. As to morals, these cannot be said to be of the Sunday-school type—but they are less appallingly bad than was the case even twenty years ago.

By far the worst section of the community in this last respect are the miners engaged in the sulphur mines. The mines employ on an average some twenty thousand individuals, and produce sulphur to the value of considerably over a million sterling yearly. Child labour is largely employed, and formerly unfortunate boys were subjected to the most inhuman treatment, and steeped from their earliest years in every kind of vice and depravity. At seven and eight years old children were actually sold to the miners, and no care was taken that they should be humanely treated. They were used to transport the sulphur to the mouth of the mines, and often laden in such a manner that they became permanently deformed. Peasants accepted "loans," varying in amount from seventy-five to a hundred and fifty lire, for the right to employ their children in the mines—and this loan in reality meant the selling of the child into slavery, for until the money was repaid, which it seldom or ever was, the child remained the absolute property of the miner who had thus bought it. As the miners were, and still are, often *pregiudicati*, or men already condemned for criminal offences, it may be imagined what treatment these unfortunate children had to endure. Legislation has in recent years considerably improved this state of affairs, but much improvement yet remains to be effected, and the laws are frequently more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

A few years ago, 83 per cent. of the population of Sicily was illiterate, and perhaps in no other country in the world would illiteracy on such a scale have been so little noticeable on the surface of things. The natural intelligence and extraordinary acuteness of the Sicilian counterbalanced, superficially, this absence of education. It is curious to note that the feudal system was not abolished in Sicily until 1813, when the government of Francis I. attempted to put an end to its exactions. It was only a partially successful attempt, however, and it caused a rebellion of the dispossessed barons. Land compulsorily sold did not, as was intended, fall into the hands of the poorer classes as small tenures, but was absorbed by communes and municipalities.

These are dry subjects, but it is only by studying them that one can gain an insight into Sicilian life, and some understanding of why so beautiful a country, inhabited by so virile a race, should not be the most prosperous portion of the Kingdom of Italy.

Not even Athens has anything more impressive to show than the great temples at Girgenti. Distant some two miles from the town, they stand on an elevated plateau from which rugged cliffs fall away towards the sea. The city, which is modern, has nothing to detain a visitor, and a good deal to send him hurrying away from it.

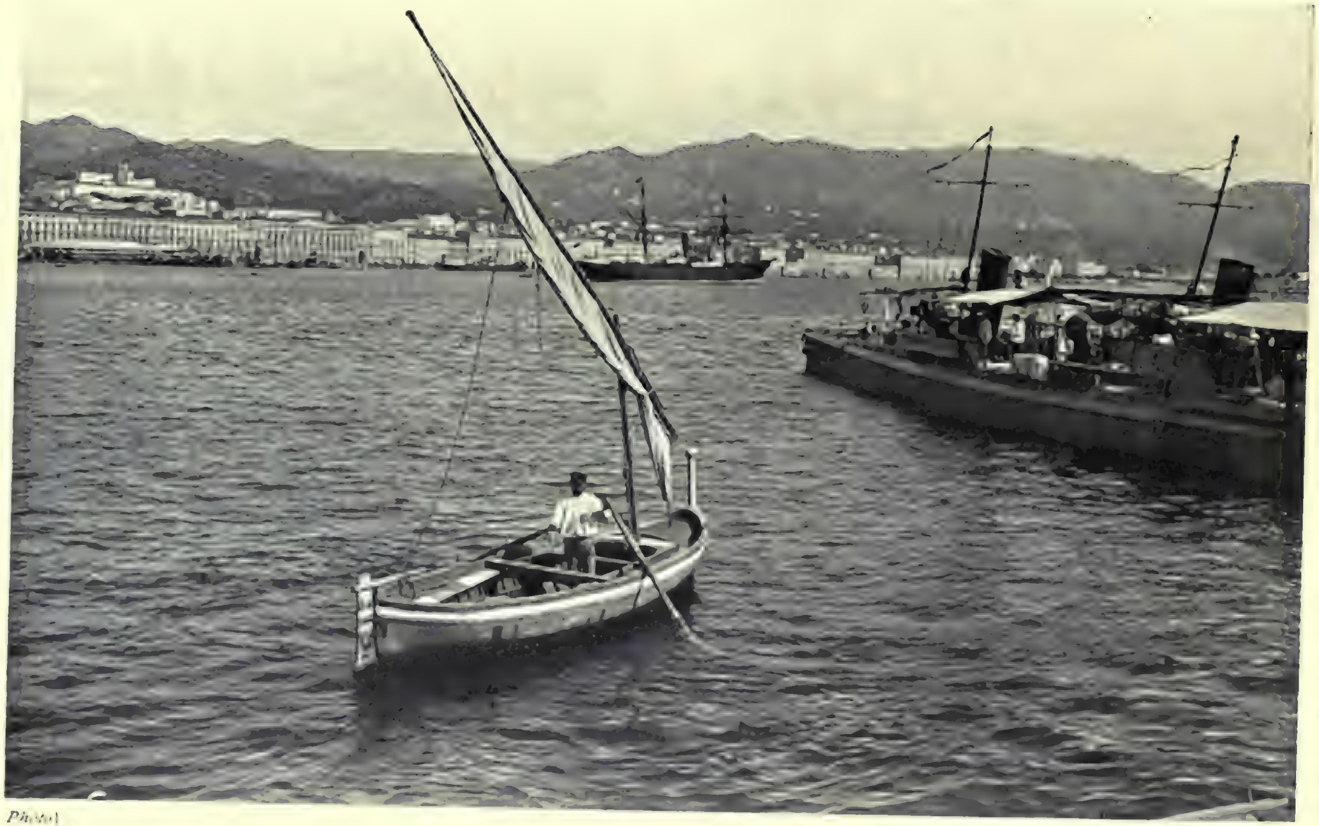
There are supposed to have been at least six of these gigantic temples at one time in existence, but their number is now practically reduced to two in a state of tolerable preservation, though the remains of others are still prominent features in this wild, though beautiful landscape. It is worth while to stay the night in this spot, if only to see the magnificent effects of light caused by the sunset. Then, and for long after the sun has disappeared below the sea, the great yellow temples take on a succession of most brilliant colours, at first blood-red, and gradually changing to well-nigh every hue of the rainbow. For three-and-twenty centuries these mighty relics of a former faith, and types of the greatness of a people, have stood on their plateau above the sea, while civilisations have been born, have died, and have been born again, and a large part of the history of the world has sailed beneath them. The finest of all, alas!—that of Zeus-Olympus, was destroyed in the fifteenth century, and its material was afterwards used in the building of a breakwater at Porto Empedocle near by.

But, after all, they are exasperating things, these ruins of a past age, for they do but serve to emphasise the fact of how very little even the most learned among us know of the life of which they were the centre, and how impossible it is even to the most imaginative among us to conjure up that life with anything approaching to its reality. No; Girgenti, Pæstum, Segeste,—even Athens, if you will,—these are places to dream in, and to wake up humbled by a sense of the pitiful mutability of humanity and its creeds and doings, and by the reflection that the greatness of a race—its religions and its deeds—

are mere passing phases destined sooner or later, if not to total oblivion, at any rate to a more or less total misconception of their actual conditions and significance. It is difficult to understand why, and for what object, these mighty temples were destroyed, and why some were taken and others left. It is also difficult to understand how they were destroyed. They are far more massive than any of the buildings of Old Rome that were used in the Middle Ages as quarries for material to be employed in the building of palaces for priests and nobles. Those pestilent persons—the early Christians—could scarcely have wrecked them in fanatic rage, for the earlier faiths still lingered in Magna Grecia long after the first fury of their fanaticism had passed. Moreover, the fabrics of temples of the earlier faiths were as a rule adapted to Christian worship, the works of art only being profaned and destroyed. It is quite possible that some terrible convulsion of Nature, rather than the hand of man, laid these mighty columns low—some earthquake such as that which has recently devastated Messina and its neighbourhood.

In all my wanderings in Italy, and some of them have taken me into very solitary places, Girgenti is the only spot in which I have had to take out a weapon from my pocket with the full intention of using it. I was alone in the dusk of a spring evening, having lingered among the temples watching the effects of a particularly beautiful sunset. Afterwards, when the afterglow had died away over land and sea, I walked along a narrow track among the brushwood of the cliffs, and presently

I became conscious that two men, shepherds or goatherds, were following me. For a few minutes I lost sight of them; but, turning a corner, found them in the path in front of me, they having obviously circumvented me. One of them asked for money, and his companion, I presume, wishing to accentuate the demand, played carelessly with a knife. Fortunately, I had a fully loaded revolver with me, for I had no money upon me but a few loose francs, which would certainly not have satisfied the couple. I made no pretence of playing with my revolver, but gave them to understand that if they moved a step nearer to me I would fire. I am tolerably certain that I should have missed if I had fired; but the threat, and the sight of the levelled revolver, had an instant and satisfactory effect, for the men turned into the brushwood and disappeared. I confess, however, that I was not comfortable till I regained the road leading to the little hotel near the temples, for I felt that at any moment a rush might be made upon me from the cover of the brushwood, and I had had time to notice that the men were both big, wiry fellows who could certainly have overpowered me in a struggle, unless I had the luck to disable them with a couple of bullets. I did not see them again, however, and I kept the incident to myself, not wishing to make a *disturbo* and perhaps be detained at Girgenti in order to make depositions before the *Pretore.* I had no business, of course, to be alone after dusk in so solitary a spot; and no doubt the sight of a *straniero* by himself at that hour was a temptation which I ought not to have put in the



Photo] [Alinari.

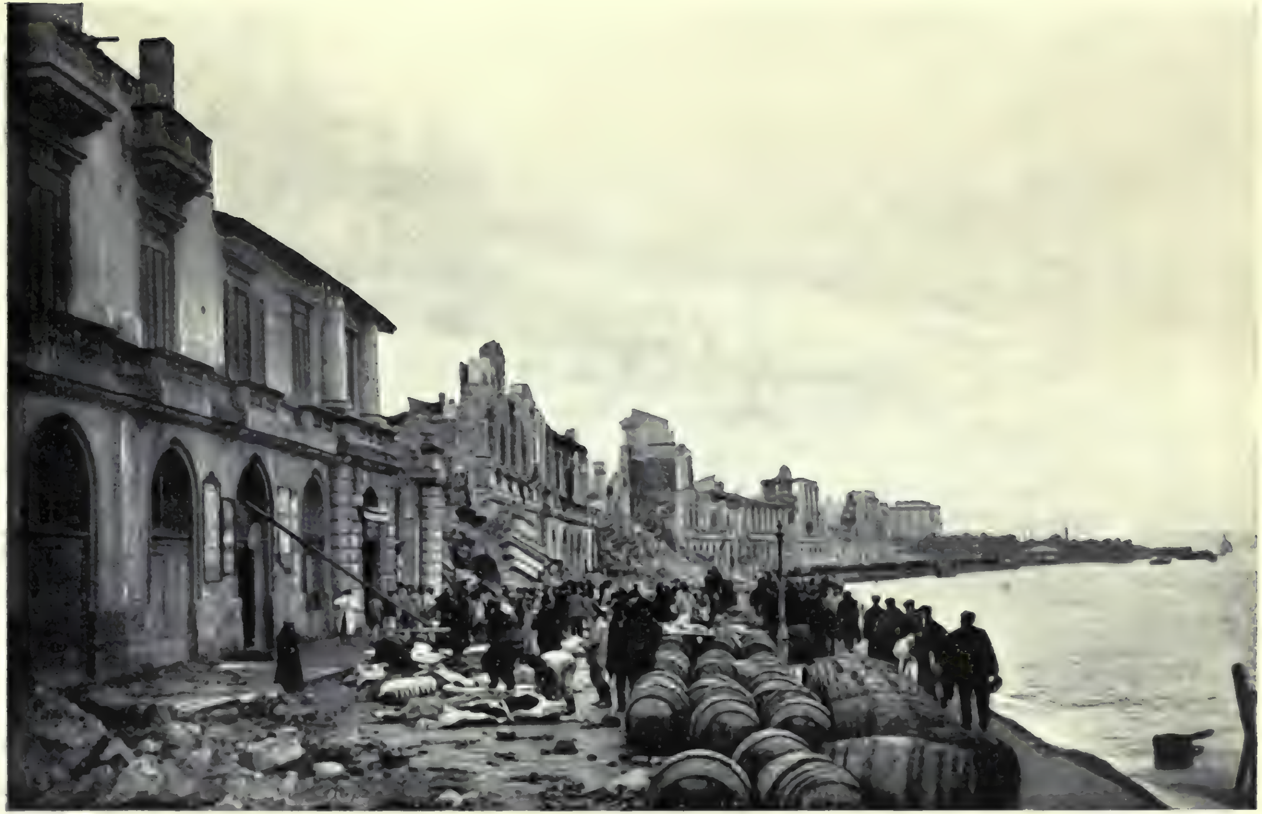
MESSINA, BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1909.

way of similar individuals. Had it not been for the significant manner in which one of the men handled his knife I would gladly have shared my francs with them; but I knew that if I had done so, further complications would in all probability have arisen, and the place was not adapted to them.

I own with shame that I have never been on the slopes of Etna, and still less ascended that mountain, neither, except *en passant*, have I been at Taormina. During the very few hours I once spent at that place I confess that I took perhaps an altogether unreasonable dislike to it, though I quite appreciated its peculiar beauty. I think I was unfortunate, for I ran into a huge party of tourists—English tourists—whose manners and proceedings did not make me feel proud of being their compatriot. I noticed, however, that the people of Taormina seemed to be accustomed to the type, and, indeed, they did not appear to me to be a people easily scandalised. Here, too, I believe, is a German colony. Indeed, Germans are rapidly colonising the whole of the Sicilian coast towns and these resorts within reach of them. In Palermo, Catania, and Syracuse, German goods are to the fore where a few years ago it would have been the pride of the shopkeeper to produce *roba inglese*; and here, again, I ask what our commercial travellers are about, and why we as a race continue to adhere to the stupid old tradition that "English carries you everywhere"? The German travellers I have met all speak Italian—and some of them very good Italian—*minus* the pronunciation which, when all is said and done, is infinitely better than that of ninety out of a hundred Englishmen attempting to speak the language.

It is only a couple of years ago that the horrified attention of the whole world was turned to Messina. The particulars of the catastrophe which overtook and wrecked the flourishing modern city, and many places in its vicinity on both shores of the straits, causing a loss of human life the full extent of which can only be approximately guessed at, is too fresh in the minds of all to make any account of it necessary in these pages. The illustrations here given of the city as it was before the disasters, and as it appeared immediately afterwards will, I hope, be sufficient to give an idea of the devastation wrought by the earthquakes and the appalling phenomena which took place in the bed of the sea. That Messina is slowly rising again from her wreck is a sign of the perseverance and courage which dominates the modern Italians in face of adversity. The geographical position of this most ancient of seaports, too, and its commercial importance, are such as to make it well-nigh impossible to abandon it, unless, indeed, as many think will one of these days occur, some fresh convulsion of Nature cause the straits once more to disappear, and this portion of the coast to be reunited to the continent.

I fear it cannot be said that the conduct of the officials—either at the moment of the catastrophe, or during the period when the relief funds and material sent from all the nations of the world should have been properly organised and distributed



MESSINA, AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.

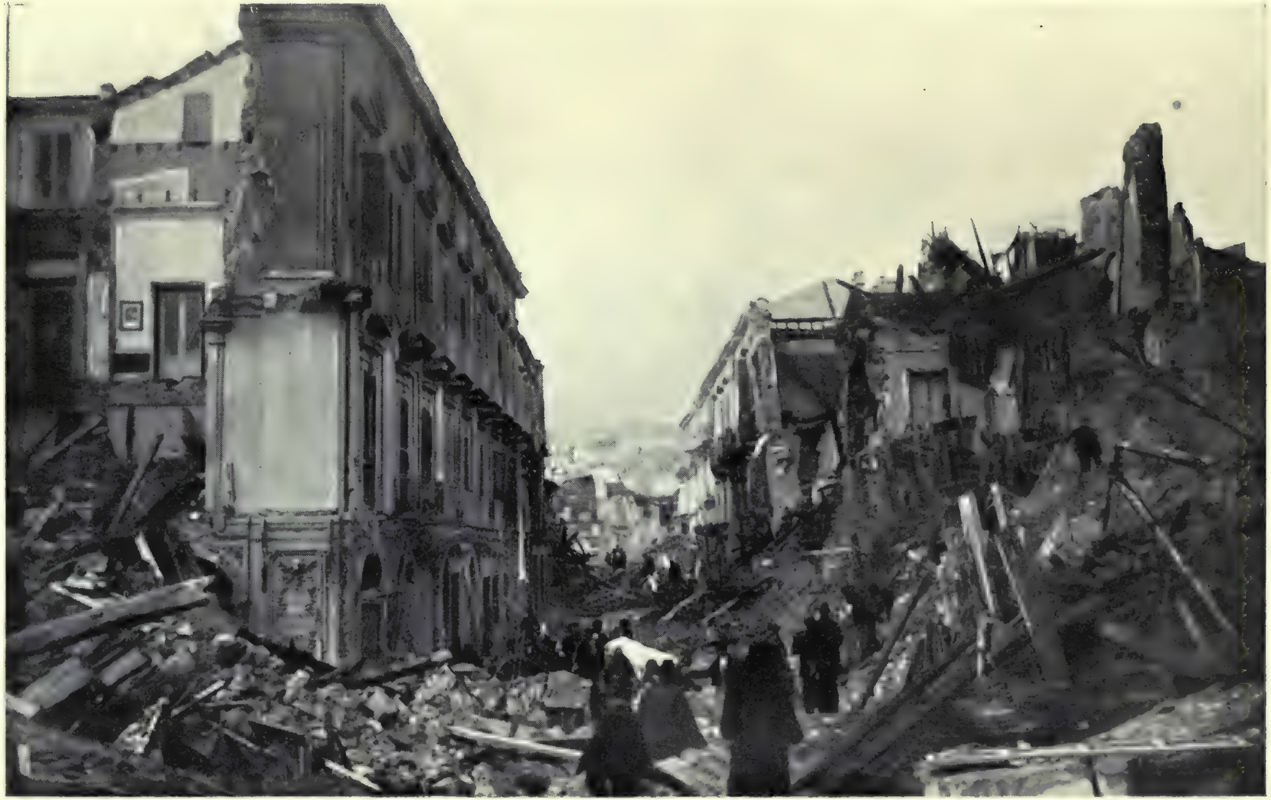
—redounded to their credit. It is not a pleasant story, and the less said about it the better. The King and Queen, as usual, were the first on the spot, heedless of danger, and thinking only of how they could rescue and comfort the survivors of the disaster. The soldiers, as the Italian soldiers always do at such times, risked their lives freely among the falling masonry wherever it was known or suspected that human beings lay entombed. The danger, fatigue, and privations the troops, summoned to aid at that time, had to endure, and endured cheerfully and without a murmur, were untold; and I think that recognition of their heroism has never been sufficiently manifested out of Italy, so largely engrossed was public attention in the details and horrors of the catastrophe itself.

Local bureaucracy, however, mismanaged and misspent huge sums of money, and allowed vast quantities of stores and material to accumulate and remain unutilised during many weeks and even months, when prompt and energetic action and a putting aside of red-tapeism was imperative. Had it not been for the determination and energy displayed by both the King and the Queen in recalling the authorities to a sense of duty and, it may be added, decency, and in the prompt measures for relief which they themselves initiated and caused to be carried out, it is to be feared that the tale of the Messina disasters would be but another proof of the incompetency of a democratic bureaucracy to rise to a sense of its duties in the face of a national calamity, or properly to administer funds committed to its charge.

The modern city of Messina, with its university, its cathedral founded by the great Count Roger of Sicily in 1098, its busy port and fine harbour, was second among the Sicilian cities. It was not an agreeable one, however, to spend more time in than absolutely necessary, neither was its population all that could be desired. Perhaps the new Messina may be an improvement on the older one in most respects, and doubtless it will be so.

We are on classic ground again, however, and at Messina, as in every other Sicilian town, we may profitably close our eyes to the present and dream of the past. Few cities are so ancient. The inhabitants of that mighty metropolis, Cumae, founded it nearly eight hundred years before Christ. The City of the Sickle, as it was then called, was subsequently possessed by Carthaginians and Saracens before it fell into the hands of the Norman rulers of Sicily. In its streets, in later years, the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers was carried out with savage enthusiasm, while, after the Italian Unity, it was the last place in Italy to submit to the new order of things. In reality, of classical relics in Messina there were practically none, even before its recent destruction. One must do one's dreaming around its harbour and along its lovely straits. We can sail in the spirit with Ulysses past Scylla and Charybdis, and when we reach them we may be justified in hoping that the ancients did not always lie so unblushingly as they did when describing the dangers which mariners had to encounter when steering a course.

I would fain hope that this volume may not



VIA VITTORIO EMANUELE, MESSINA: AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.

prove to be my Scylla and Charybdis! I am conscious that in it I have purposely avoided certain dangerous places; but I am by no means sure that I have not fallen into others. My readers and I have travelled together—though very likely many of them will have endured only a small portion of the journey—from the extreme north of Italy to the extreme south; and if on the road I have not talked guide-book to them, but given them some idea, however superficial, of Italian life and Italian character, I shall have accomplished more than I had hoped to do.

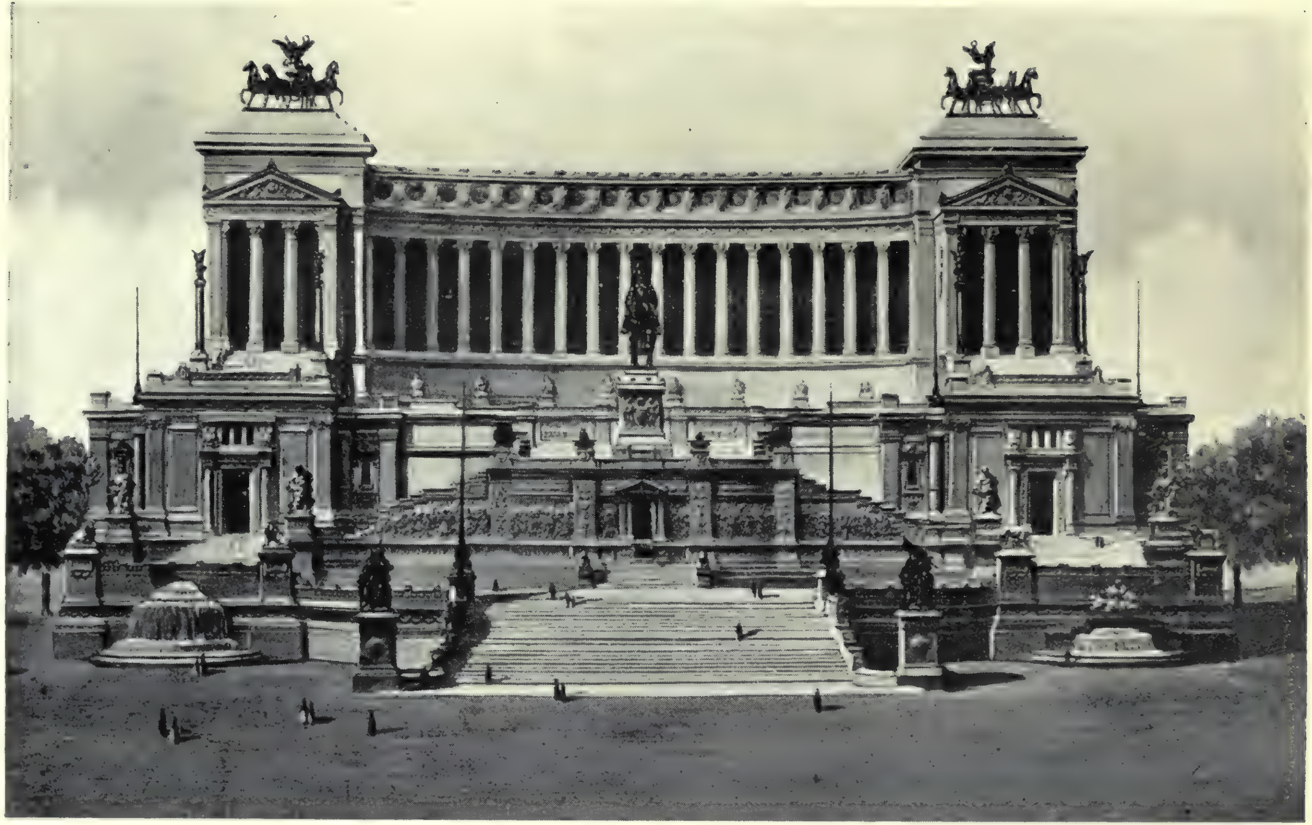
Many parts of the country which has become a second home to me I have left untouched, and if I have touched on others but slightly, it is because I am too well aware that their history and their art has been already described to satiety. So far as I have ventured to touch upon these last at all, I have done so merely with a view to recalling things already well known to my readers, but perhaps temporarily forgotten by them; but not in any way with the idea that I could say anything new concerning them. My Italian year, such as it has been, has come to an end so far as journeying is concerned. I think there only remains for me the endeavour to recall to my readers' memory some of the details of those magnificent victories which, in the course of a series of battles lasting fifty years, and which, perhaps, are not yet entirely at an end, the modern Italians have won in the face of the most determined opposition, both external and internal.

CHAPTER XV

THE TRIUMPH OF ITALY

ONCE again, after long centuries, the Capitol of Rome has been the scene of a Triumph. A long array of chained captives have followed the victor's car. A motley procession! Tyranny, Foreign Domination, Priestcraft, Ignorance, and the twin of Ignorance—Superstition—all these have been represented among the captives; and who shall say that they are not trophies of victory more glorious than any which graced the Triumph of a Cæsar?

But the Capitol has witnessed, in this present year, a scene of far deeper import than the triumphal progress of an individual. It has assisted at the national triumph of a race. Together with the whole of the civilised world it has looked down on the celebration not of one victorious campaign only, but of a series of hardly-fought battles waged for more than half a century against well-nigh overpowering forces. That the victory is not yet entirely complete in no way detracts from its significance, for none who have carefully watched the progress of the long fight, and who have marked the ground already won, can have any doubts as to its ultimate issue.



MONUMENT TO VICTOR EMANUEL, ROME.

The events which led to the making of United Italy have been briefly glanced at in these pages; but it may not be amiss to devote this concluding chapter of *My Italian Year* to some particulars of the immense task which devolved upon the modern Italians, in consequence of the successful transformation of a heterogeneous group of states and peoples—which sixty years ago almost justified an Austrian politician in referring to Italy as being merely a geographical expression—into a united monarchy and a people inspired by common national aims and interests.

I often have occasion to wonder whether my compatriots, who visit the country for a few weeks or months, realise, even to the most superficial degree, the true significance of what they see all around them, and whether they have the remotest conception of what has been accomplished in Italy in the course of the last fifty years. I imagine, from the remarks and criticisms I so frequently hear made by them, that they neither realise the one nor possess the other. Now, it is extremely easy to make unfavourable comparisons between a human organisation which has been in working order for several centuries, and which has had well-nigh a thousand years in which to perfect its machinery, and one that has but little over half a century of practical existence. Nevertheless, it is such a comparison which, albeit unconsciously, English people are too prone to make when they declaim against the shortcomings of the Italians in matters relating to everyday life. They forget that if Rome was not built in a day, neither was England; and they do not reflect that it is entirely unfair, and not a little absurd, to judge a people that has fifty years of national life by the standards rightly appertaining to a people which lives under an organisation that has needed nearly twenty times as long a period in which to attain to its actual development. This neglect of proportion, if I may so call it, on the part of their foreign critics, certainly does not add to the value of such criticisms in the eyes of Italians. It merely arouses that sense of bitterness which all unjust criticism is apt to excite.

Let us glance at the social conditions of Italy when the Italians were at last free to place the coping-stone on the edifice they had raised, and to make Rome the capital of the United kingdom. The quarter of a century immediately preceding that moment had, of necessity, been devoted to a life-struggle with foreign foes settled in their midst. Yet, even during the period when the forces, physical and moral, of the newly formed nation were required to expel foreign domination, and the chances of success were more than doubtful, much was being done in anticipation; and by the time the fraudulently acquired temporal sovereignty of the Papacy fell, and the chief internal foe to Italian liberty was, if not rendered impotent, at all events effectually muzzled, much had been given to Italy by the extraordinary energy of her liberators, seconded by the self-sacrifice of her sons. Railways, considerable concessions to the principles of Free Trade—which in those days was certainly a greater boon to a nation than it has since become under altered conditions of industry—new and enlightened civil and penal codes, local government, protection against priestly persecutions and extortions, free education,—these are only some of the provisions, created in the face of the greatest difficulties and carried into effect with surprising rapidity and indomitable resolution, that were being quietly matured in anticipation of the day when they should become national assets.

That these measures, necessary to national progress and civilisation, could not be put into operation without a heavy call on the purse of the Italian people was obvious; and the way in which the young nation responded to that call, and still continues to respond to it, is certainly not the least among the factors contributing to the justification of that modern Roman Triumph which has taken place in the shadow of the capital to-day.

Returning to the critics, and especially to the English critics, of the way in which the Italians have managed their internal affairs, these, I think, are too ready to overlook the fact that the Italian battle for liberty and progress, for unity at home and peace and justice abroad, began rather than ended when she succeeded in expelling the foreigner from her gates. It was natural that, with so many weighty questions to be dealt with regarding foreign, ecclesiastical, and financial policy, the problems connected with social reform should have been momentarily relegated to a second place during the period immediately succeeding the final consolidation of the new Italian kingdom. As I have pointed out, however, the machinery for a complete process of social reformation had already been prepared, and when in 1876, only six years after the transformation of

Rome into the capital of United Italy, the then Minister of Finance, Marco Minghetti, was able to produce a budget which brought the revenue and expenditure of the country to a balance, this machinery was at once put into operation.

But it would be useless to deny, since Italians themselves would not deny it, that, from the year 1876 until late in the eighties, party ambition rather than the welfare of the country influenced the rulers of Italy. It is to this period that Italy owes the growth of that bureaucratic fungus which, when once permitted to take root in a nation, is with difficulty eradicated. Northern statesmen were replaced by politicians of a less patriotic character, who brought with them the shifty and corrupt practices and principles which had ever distinguished the political adventurers of the South. Under the Depretis administration, which practically lasted until 1887, reforms had to be paid for by votes to keep that administration in office. The Chamber of Deputies became little more than a committee of the Government, and its members were easily bribed to give consent to any measures calculated to secure to the Depretis Cabinet continuance in office.

Had this system of corruption been applied to the Parliament only, its effects, perhaps, would not have been so far-reaching or so detrimental to the true interests of the country. Unfortunately, however, the Civil Service fell a victim to similar methods of corruption. Posts in this service were unblushingly bestowed on those who had least qualification for the handling of public monies, or for the exercise of the powers entrusted to them. The number of *impiegati* in all the various departments of the State was increased to an altogether ridiculous extent; and, in a word, the country was saddled with an army of ill-paid officials drawn from every class, whose sole *raison d'être* was that they were obedient creatures of an administration the only programme of which was office.

In those years Italy sowed the seed of that internal discontent which, together with the ceaseless animosity of the Vatican, has proved so serious an obstacle to the completion of her victory over the powers fighting against her. The national discontent very soon manifested itself in the appearance of various parties disaffected not only towards the Government—which would in itself have been a healthy sign—but towards the very Constitution which the patriotic and disinterested politicians of earlier years had evolved in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties. Republicanism, Socialism, Anarchism—every shade of extremist opinion—found their supporters in a country still in its infancy and requiring neither parties nor programmes to guide its steps, but one compact and solid administrative power to direct it unswervingly towards that goal which the creators of United Italy had set before it.

Notwithstanding the entirely undeserved humiliation which he eventually brought upon his country at Adowa, and other transactions which need not be here recalled, the advent of Francesco Crispi to power, at the death of Depretis, was a blessing, albeit in disguise, to Italy. A strong man was needed, and Crispi, with all his defects, was a strong man and an able leader. If his methods were at times of the least scrupulous kind, he at all events had the excuse of finding himself confronted by a situation not far short of chaotic. The people instinctively felt that a strong hand was at last at the helm, although they neither loved nor trusted the owner of it. Perhaps Crispi's worst error, apart from his allowing himself to be influenced by dishonest speculators and contractors into plunging his country into an unjust and disastrous war with Abyssinia, was his ruthless attitude towards Socialism.

I hasten to add that, personally, I am very far indeed from sympathising with Socialism, or any party the ultimate aims of which is to destroy the balance of society. But it would be a great mistake to confound Italian Socialism and the aims it has hitherto had in view with that advanced and exaggerated gospel of disintegration and destruction which has lately found adherents in England among individuals who, it may be supposed, have the effrontery to consider themselves statesmen.

The seeds sown during the Depretis administration had borne ample fruit by the time Crispi succeeded to office; and Anarchism, imported from Russia and from America, was rapidly being propagated among the discontented ranks of the working classes. The stern repressive measures adopted by Crispi against the subversive parties in the State were unluckily applied in all their severity also to the Socialists, whose *programma minimo* was not only harmless, but positively beneficial in drawing attention to legitimate hardships and abuses from which the proletariat was suffering at the hands of unscrupulous employers of labour, and under the petty tyranny of bureaucracy.

As I have pointed out in a preceding chapter, the arch-enemy of the State, the Vatican, was not slow to take advantage of these measures, and to turn them to its own account; and Crispi, who was at heart a bitter anticlerical, undoubtedly played into the priests' hands by enforcing them. As is infallibly the case, persecution led to a greater diffusion of subversive doctrines, and flagrant instances of injustice bred an ever-increasing spirit of bitterness and discontent among the industrial classes, which may be said to have culminated when the ill-fated King Humbert fell a victim to the errors of his Ministers at the hands of an assassin who had received his instructions in America.

However little sympathy one may have with Socialism, it must be admitted that the influence of the leaders of that movement in Italy has been on the whole beneficial. Abuses long ignored, or openly countenanced, have been redressed owing to their action in and outside Parliament; the passage of wise measures for improving the conditions of labour and education have been facilitated, and sometimes initiated by their energy; while—and for this they deserve the gratitude of the enlightened of all countries—they have systematically fought against the ignorance and superstition taught and encouraged by the Church, and have opened the eyes of a vast number of their compatriots to the corrupt practices of a considerable proportion of the priesthood.

In later years, and under the wise and liberal reign of Victor Emanuel III., of whom it may be perhaps permitted to say that he is a better statesman than many of his Ministers, political persecutions have ceased. The result has been that the extreme parties in the State have largely modified their programmes and their views. Although social problems are still acute, and perpetual strikes, industrial and agricultural, still bear evidence of a certain amount of discontent and unrest, the monarchy is ever gaining ground in the affections of the people. Even the Socialists are in their hearts convinced that the fall of the monarchy would mean the disruption and political annihilation of Italy; while the Republicans, who at one time were a not inconsiderable party in the State, have now become a *quantité négligéable.*

Of all the criticisms to which modern Italy is subjected by the superior foreigner—and, like all young people, she has to endure a good deal of criticism from her elders—perhaps the most shallow is that stock-in-trade one which taunts her with having lost the artistic spirit that might be supposed to be her especial patrimony. I hope I may escape the accusation of being a Philistine if I venture to suggest that the utilitarian rather than the artistic spirit is of primary importance to a young nation. It may be true that the modern Italians have not that artistic sense which so specially distinguished their forefathers. Indeed, the streets of Rome, and of other great Italian cities, bear painful witness to the surprising decay of that sense; while the artistic output in what are known as the Fine Arts is, in the main, on a very deplorable level when compared with that of past centuries. But the critics in question are apt to forget, or to despise, the existence of what may be termed the utilitarian arts; and in many of these Italy has shown herself to be second to none, and, in some, a pioneer. It would seem as though Italian intellect had been specially directed into other channels than those of purely creative art, in order successfully to deal with the new position in which the events of the last fifty years have placed the country. To produce distinguished men in the fields of social and applied science, of medicine, surgery, engineering, and invention, has indisputably been of greater practical use to modern Italy than a reincarnation of the entire company of those mighty artists of the *cinque* and *seicento* who made her so famous in the past.

A fairer criticism would be to admit that, while the higher ideals of creative art in all its branches—save that of music—are dormant in the Italians of the present day, they are nobly replaced by inventive and creative genius belonging to other domains of human intellect more important to a nation occupied in the supreme task of securing to itself its rightful position among the leading countries of the world.

And while I am discoursing on the subject of foreign criticism of Italian methods of conducting Italian affairs, I should like to point out how very invidious, not to say impertinent, are those explosions of indignation to which our English journals too often lend their columns whenever the authorities in Rome, or in other Italian cities, venture to carry out what, rightly or wrongly, they consider to be changes necessary to the requirements of their town. No one likes to be told by an outsider how he should manage his own house; and interference of this nature seldom produces any result other than that of resentment, or amusement. If our indignant letter-writers to the newspapers would only believe it, Italy possesses plenty of eminent men as anxious as any foreigner can be to preserve, so far as possible, the beautiful and historic monuments of their own country, and to mount guard over the unique artistic heritage bequeathed to Italy by the past. They might also with advantage reflect that, in cases in which the protests of such eminent Italians pass unheeded, their own are scarcely likely to be regarded in any other light than that of an interference doubly unwarrantable, inasmuch as it proceeds from foreigners who have no logical right to impose it. Methods of government, and the habits and customs of another country are, of course, legitimate subjects for criticism. But when criticism is carried to the lengths of dictating to municipal authorities of foreign cities how they should manage their own concerns, it degenerates into what schoolboys would call "infernal cheek."

It is natural that the majority of visitors to Italy should form their opinions as to her national progress in the last fifty years chiefly by what meets their eyes in the larger towns. Well, we have only to compare the present conditions of such cities as Rome and Naples and Genoa with those of even twenty years ago to realise the immense improvements which have taken place in every direction. Some mistakes, no doubt, have been made, and great ones; and some relics of the past have been too hastily swept away which might well have been spared without any considerable sacrifice of public convenience. Many of us know, however, to our cost, how difficult is the task of altering an old house so as to bring it into line with modern requirements without committing acts of archæological and æsthetic sacrilege; and the problem is certainly not easier of solution in the case of ancient cities which have to be remodelled in accordance with the requirements of vastly increased populations, and with those of modern and scientific hygienic principles. Moreover, we are so accustomed in these days to accept as a matter of course all that modern science has placed at our disposal to add to the comfort and safety of our daily lives, that it may be doubted whether any but a very few among us pause to consider what these things really represent, or what has to be sacrificed in order to benefit by them.

As one who is accustomed to spend most of his Italian year in country districts, I venture to think that in these, even more than in the great cities, are to be found the most striking object-lessons in Italian national progress. It is in the small country towns and villages that comparisons may best be made with the old order of things by any one who recollects them; and it is in these that an idea may best be formed of the immense work accomplished by modern Italy in a couple of generations of national existence. This phase of Italian life very naturally escapes the attention of the average visitor to Italy, who is seldom brought into anything but passing contact with it. And yet, in all countries, it is to the rural districts and to the small local towns that one must look if one wishes really to judge of a nation's progress, or of a people's character. And, of all countries, this is especially the case with Italy. She has no great industrial cities on the scale to be found in coal-producing countries, with the exception of Milan, Genoa, and Naples. The remainder depend quite as much, or more, on their historic and artistic past for their importance and influence as on their present capacities for trade or manufacture, though several of lesser rank, such as Bari, Livorno, and others, must not be placed in this category.

Side by side with the spread of education in the country districts, with all its attendant advantages, one cannot help noticing a feature which, in the not remote future, is likely to prove an embarrassment to the nation, and which is already making itself felt in various ways. Together with education has come ambition on the part of the agricultural and operative classes to enter spheres of action very different from those with which their fathers were contented. We have seen how the intelligent member of a contadino's family often became a priest—as he often does to this day. Now, however, the priestly trade is none too well looked upon by the more respectable and self-respecting members of the peasant community. The lad who should be a peasant becomes a student, and his aim is to join the already overcrowded ranks of the bureaucracy, or to become a lawyer or a doctor. The universities are crowded with these young men, who for the most part pass the best years of their lives in being students, and nothing more—and very often unruly and ill-disciplined students at that! Nothing could well be worse than the Italian system of university life. Unruly youths are treated as men, instead of being subjected to severe discipline when they show symptoms of insubordination. In many agricultural districts the land is going out of cultivation, because peasants who should be following the plough are wasting their lives and their health in the cities.

A remarkable development in Italian rural life, and one that is wholly advantageous, is the movement in the direction of public thrift which has taken place during the last few years. Co-operative societies, savings banks, and people's banks exist on a scale and are conducted on a system immeasurably superior to anything of the kind that we can show in England. Co-operative stores are to be found in even the most insignificant of villages, and I can vouch for the fact that the goods sold by them are often superior in quality to those one may buy at almost double the price in the shops of the large towns. Friendly societies are numerous, and many of these are wealthy enough to advance loans at a reasonable rate of interest to the agriculturist or peasant proprietor, who again finds assistance and encouragement in the agricultural syndicates. It is worthy of notice that this movement is largely due to the action of the Socialists, and that its initiation was the almost immediate result of the change in the policy of the Italian Government towards Socialism, which has been so prominent a feature in the wise reign of the present sovereign.

It would be hopeless, indeed, to attempt to enumerate within the limits of this volume the many victories won by the modern Italian energy and statesmanship in the rural districts over conditions, habits, customs, and traditions, which were not the less pernicious to the welfare of the country because they happened in many instances to be picturesque. These are victories which have been won silently and unostentatiously, and which have usually escaped the attention of foreigners. Nevertheless, they have contributed not a little to the justification of that Triumph with which, among all nations, England has perhaps the prior right to sympathise. There are some who consider, and the present writer is among the number, that England might have done more to help the young nation at whose birth she assisted and, to a certain extent, facilitated; and that there have been occasions when Italy might legitimately have complained of a certain discrepancy between the words and the deeds of her traditional friend. However this may be, it need not be dwelt upon here. The truest friendships do not invariably depend entirely upon services rendered or received.

An important factor in national life is still comparatively lacking in Italy—and this is Public Opinion. I do not mean to imply that public opinion is altogether lacking in Italy. It would be more just to say that it is dormant, and this partly for want of any definite guidance, and partly because it possesses no real means of cohesion and expression.

The parliamentary elections, unfortunately, do not supply these means, for reasons which any one who is acquainted with the peculiarities of their procedure will readily understand. The Italian Press, as a whole, makes little or no effort to supply the deficit. Of newspapers there are no end. Each provincial town has one, and sometimes many more; but these, as a rule, are content to give their readers articles dealing with local matters only, and the great questions of national importance are too often subordinated to municipal frictions or matter inspired by the deputy of the *collegio.* Even the great journals will dedicate columns to satisfying public curiosity concerning a murder or a suicide to the exclusion of other more healthy and useful material, while their political and social matter is handled rather with a view to furthering the interests of some parliamentary group or individual politician than to forming any compact body of public opinion on questions of vital interest to the State. The *Giornale d'Italia* may be said to be almost, if not quite, alone among the leading Italian newspapers in its steady and persistent endeavours to create a healthy and discriminating public opinion in the country, and to guide its readers towards a wider and more imperial view on subjects connected with politic and social and economic questions.

There can be no doubt that a dozen authoritative journals, inspired with such an aim as the one I have mentioned, however much they might differ among themselves in political theories, had they the capital necessary to build up a large circulation, would do more to further and educate public opinion in Italy than the innumerable minor publications which, in most cases, are launched with altogether inadequate means—financial, literary, and moral; and the letterpress of which is apt to appeal rather to the morbid curiosity of the public than to its higher intelligence. That a strong desire exists in Italy for some recognised channels of public opinion I can assert from personal knowledge; and I hasten to add that my remarks on this subject merely re-echo sentiments I frequently hear expressed by Italians of all classes.

No doubt the large proportion of illiterates which exists among the population, and more particularly in the south, renders any concrete formation of a public opinion, and any definite expression of it, difficult. It is no secret that the political elections do not in reality express the views or desires of the people. Hitherto the suffrage has not been granted to illiterates; but one of the provisions of a reform now (June 1911) submitted to the Chamber of Deputies extends the parliamentary vote also to illiterates who shall have attained the age of thirty years, and to all who shall have performed their military service.

It will be curious to see what effect this extension will have, should it pass into law, and that it will so pass is practically certain. The total electorate of the country would be thus raised to 7,711,000, of whom 2,711,000 are illiterates. This measure is probably only a preliminary step to universal suffrage, which system has many supporters in Italy. There can be little question that extension of the franchise to illiterates, especially in the southern portions of the Italian kingdom, will greatly strengthen the hands of the clerical party and the priests, as it is among the ignorant and uneducated that these most easily maintain their influence. In all probability, therefore, a counteracting check to the increased power which this extension will almost certainly give to clericalism in the management of the political affairs of the nation will only be found by making the suffrage universal.

Another trophy which might well be added to a future Triumph of Italy would be the establishment of a Poor Law—and here, again, I am only a critic at second hand. Among the many unjust and untrue assertions made by foreigners concerning Italy is one to the effect that no maintenance of or care for the poor exists in the country. Nothing could be further from fact. There is no legal obligation as yet binding on the State to maintain paupers, nor any taxes which can be directly levied for such a purpose. But Italy possesses an immense number of public charitable institutions, richly endowed by donations and legacies, many of which have descended from medieval times, and which are perpetually being supplemented by others from later and present benefactors. Moreover, provincial and municipal councils are empowered to make grants to any species of charitable institution. I believe that according to recent statistics the property of the secular charitable institutions alone amounts to nearly eighty millions of pounds sterling. This in itself should be sufficient refutation of the charge that Italy cares nothing for her sick and her poor.

If begging in the streets is still an abuse in certain towns in Italy, this is largely due to the folly of strangers who give to individuals who, in nine cases out of ten, are arrant impostors—as are street beggars everywhere. It is instructive to see how, so soon as the season for the *forestieri* is over in towns like Rome and Naples, the beggars disappear. The deserving poor in Italy are far too proud to beg in the streets; and the most grinding poverty, alas, often goes about in a tidy gown or a neat suit, seeking to conceal itself from the eyes of the world. The greatest enemies to the public charities in Italy are the priests. These are ever seeking to divert the alms, donations, and bequests of the charitable and generous into ecclesiastical coffers. Every kind of pressure is brought to bear in order to effect this, not the least scandalous being that which exploits the affection of the living for the dead, and under the pretence of Masses for the souls of those in purgatory extorts sums of money which must in the aggregate reach an enormous total, and which might well be employed to relieve not theoretical but practical suffering. It is in the churches, be it noted, that beggars and maimed and deformed specimens of humanity most abound, notwithstanding the clerical appeals for charity. The public charities are, as a general rule, admirably managed, and their funds ably administered. But it is obvious that there are innumerable country districts into which their action cannot penetrate; and this in itself would seem to necessitate the introduction of some State measure corresponding to our English Poor Law.

There is one department of the State which is in need of the most drastic reform and purification—namely, that which controls the administration of Law and Justice. There is a great deal of Law in modern Italy; but Justice is conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, the one aim and object of Italian lawyers and legal officials seems to be to impede and prevent to the best of their power that justice should be done. Heaven help the unfortunate individual who, with the clearest evidence of right on his side, appeals to Italian tribunals to obtain it! If he be a poor man, the case will be given against him because he is poor; if he be rich, unless he has means of "squaring" influential persons, it will be given against him because he is rich and therefore can pay. The consequence of the wholesale corruption and cumbersome machinery of Italian tribunals is that people will submit to any extortion or injustice rather than carry their case into the courts, unless it is impossible to do otherwise. I do not mean to say that there are not hundreds of honest lawyers in Italy; but every honest Italian lawyer is the first to deplore and condemn the state of the Law as it now stands, and the corruption which forms so unpleasant a feature in its administration.

Individuals arrested on suspicion even of the most trivial criminal acts are in many cases, nay, in most cases, imprisoned for months, and sometimes for one or even two years before their trial comes on. If, as is often the case, they are proved to be innocent, they have no redress for the privation of their liberty and the moral, and also physical, suffering they have undergone. Justice in flagrant cases of murder is too often subordinated to sentiment, and the most brutal murderers are condemned to a few months' imprisonment only, if some "extenuating circumstance" can be found, or if the murderer have the means of enlisting the sympathies of the jury in other ways. On the other hand, some poor wretch who steals because he is in want receives a severe sentence.

Sentiment has abolished capital punishment in Italy; and perhaps this is in a way natural. The barbarous executions which for so many centuries were common spectacles, and the savage capital sentences carried out in Rome under the Papal Government, had disgusted a people naturally averse to such things. But the substitution for capital punishment in Italy is ten thousand times worse for the criminal than a merciful death. Condemnation to the *ergastolo* means condemnation to a living death—to silence, darkness, and perpetual despair. Hundreds of criminals become insane after a very few years of this form. Few who have long sentences live to come out of it; and those who are imprisoned for a shorter period return to the world broken in health, and old men before they have reached the prime of life. One would imagine that capital punishment, carried out instantaneously and in private, would be far more creditable to a civilised nation than the more barbarous punishment of condemnation to the *ergastolo*.

It would ill become a writer on Italian life and on Italian subjects not to dwell for a space on the Literature of the country—I mean, of course, its contemporary literature; since books have no unimportant share of one's year in any land. It is unfortunate that in modern Italy literature should be something of *una cosa di lusso*, a luxury which only the privileged few enjoy. In this art again, as in others of the fine arts, the modern Italians can scarcely be said to be worthy of their inheritance; or, rather, they have temporarily neglected that inheritance in order to cultivate intellectual creations of more practical utility. The modern Italian as a rule is not a great reader, except of his newspapers. The women of the leisured classes read much more than the men, and in the uppermost class they are usually far better educated. A vast scientific literature embracing all kinds of speculative research and social, historic, and economic studies has certainly arisen in the last fifty years in Italy; and many of its chief exponents, such as the Professors Lombroso, Villari, Grassi, and others are of world-wide fame. This, however, is a literature which perforce appeals to the few, and leaves no mark on the thought or the character of the majority.

An Italian author of the present day, even one of the highest literary attainments, labours under great disadvantages as compared with his compeers in England, France, Germany, Sweden, or Russia. His public, in his own country, is at the best a comparatively small one; and his earnings, I fear, would cut but a sorry figure compared with those of our own popular novelists who are possessed of every gift save that of literary art.

The greatest literary genius which modern Italy has produced — and he was a giant — is practically unknown except by name and fame to the vast majority of even his better educated compatriots. A great poet, and a prose writer of the first order, Giosue Carducci is practically unread even by those Italians who are proud of enumerating him among United Italy's greatest men. There is, I think, only one of Carducci's many splendid productions which has gained anything like popularity—and this is his Hymn to Satan. Perhaps this popularity is rather due to the strangeness and unorthodoxy of the subject than to any profound appreciation of the sublime literary workmanship of the ode.

Probably the most popular of modern Italian authors has been Edoardo d'Amicis. He wrote chiefly for the young; but his works have touched the hearts and the imaginations also of the old. The greatest of modern Italian novelists, Fogazzaro, whose death the country is still deploring, never succeeded in attaining that widespread popularity which was his due. And yet for purity of thought, style, and motive, for keenness of insight into human nature, for broad-mindedness coupled with a rigid adherence to his own principles and his own conceptions of the sacred responsibilities of his art, Antonio Fogazzaro possessed, and still possesses, no rival among modern Italian writers, and not many among their predecessors. A staunch Catholic, he was at the same time an ardent admirer of such *bêtes noires* to the Church as Darwin, and a grateful believer in the truths of modern science. Naturally enough, he soon drew upon himself the anger of the Vatican, though this fact would certainly not have diminished his popularity. He lacked, perhaps, the power of either Verga or the Sardinian novelist Grazia Deledda—two very different writers, but two who stand out a head and shoulders above their colleagues in modern Italian fiction. To read Giovanni Verga's *I Malavoglia* is to live in a Sicilian village. It is not pleasant reading, but it goes home. And yet it is not easy to find Italians out of the small section of the community which prides itself upon reading who have read it. Unlike Fogazzaro, both Verga and Grazia Deledda turn to the seamy side of life for their inspirations—but they are none the less inspirations of a terrible suggestiveness powerfully, and sometimes ruthlessly, presented.

To the foreign public, I suppose, modern Italian literature is represented by the writer who calls himself by the telling *nom de plume* of Gabriele D'Annunzio, and whose real name is Rapagnetta. It is a pity, for there are a dozen others who should more worthily represent it. If the art of literature consists in raking in a muck-heap, then it must be admitted that Gabriele D'Annunzio is a great artist, for he rakes extremely thoroughly, and no piece of refuse is left covered. In his novels, as in his plays, he is unable to depict a normal human being, male or female. Even his historical villains of both sexes in his plays lose a considerable portion of their villainy, which must certainly have been impressive enough in real life, and become melodramatic individuals who are perpetually saying to us: "Look what a wicked person I am!" In his novels one longs for a breath of fresh, pure air. In other words, one longs for something which is to be found in even the most sordid and brutal of human beings—unless they are insane human beings. But D'Annunzio's characters are not presented to us as insane people, but rather as types of humanity which the author admires for their egoistic passions and the base and sordid means they employ to gratify those passions. As a poet, D'Annunzio might have been great. As a prose writer and a playwright his popularity is scarcely likely to pass beyond the bounds of those who like to rake in the mud for their mental refreshment. His style, as his own countrymen, who frankly declare that they have to search their encyclopædias to understand his language, is at once effeminate and bombastic; and perhaps it is not only his readers who have had occasion to consult their dictionaries. Of spontaneousness there is none at all. Nevertheless, Gabriele D'Annunzio is the only living Italian writer of fiction or drama whose works are known to any appreciable extent out of Italy.

Such authors as those I have mentioned are, with the exception of Fogazzaro, scarcely known, at any rate to the English reading public. Of Ada Negri, I doubt if one English novel reader out of a thousand has heard. Of Giacosa, Arturo

Graf, Pascoli, and a dozen other poets, how much has penetrated into the drawing-rooms in which D'Annunzio's novels are discussed by those who, it may be suspected, are scarcely likely to be able to understand his laborious and archaic language better than his own countrymen? His novels, doubtless, are usually read in translation by foreigners, and thus the effeminate affection of his style escapes observation.

But it would be too much to expect that the really artistic Italian writers of fiction and poetry of the present age should be extensively read abroad when they are so little read in their own land. Italian publishers, instead of encouraging native talent, flood the "literary" market with cheap and bad translations of Zola and the representatives of the most fleshly and realistic school of French fiction; and it is this mental food with which the average modern Italian, if he read at all, nourishes himself. A gifted young Tuscan writer has lately come to the front in Italy, Sem Benelli. His dramas contain fine and musical verses, and of his remarkable literary talent there can be no doubt. But, like D'Annunzio, he has hitherto chosen his subjects from the mud of human nature.

But the captives in the triumph of modern Italy are many and varied. She has no doubt other battles to fight and to win before their numbers are complete, and before she can rest in proud security in the place she has set herself to attain. In her *Triumph of 1961*, when a century of unity has passed over her head, other captives will swell the throng following the victor's car. It is not, perhaps, for a foreigner to name them.

Italy and England have for centuries been bound to one another by ties of common sympathy. At the same time it is well to remember there is very little of the old sentimental feeling remaining on the Italian side; nor is this altogether the fault of the Italians. Politics must not enter into this book, so this is not the place to discuss them. I will only repeat that it is not unnatural if the Italians have been shrewd enough to observe that in the course of the last five-and-twenty years the political friendship of England has been apt to show itself rather in words than in action—and this at more than one critical moment in contemporary Italian history. But of friendship — and good friendship — other than political, every English person will find no lack during his, or her, sojourn in Italy, if he really desires to obtain it. In order to do this, however, he must leave many of his pet prejudices at home. And, above all, he must remember that in almost every question relating to daily life the Latin point of view differs from that of the Anglo-Saxon. The differences are often not really as great as they would appear. They are often merely different roads leading to the same goal.

But when one is living in Italy, it is undoubtedly wiser to travel, so far as possible, along the Italian road. It takes one further, and one encounters less obstacles on the way. I have travelled that road, so far as it is permitted to a foreigner to travel it, for over twenty years, and I cannot say that I have ever met with any very serious obstacles—thanks to the many and excellent Italian friends who have helped me along it. If this volume should ever meet their eyes, it is to them I would make my excuses for its many shortcomings—and for the many things left unsaid in it, almost more than for the things said. For these last, and more especially in the case of such criticisms as I have allowed myself to make, I offer less excuse, for in them my Italian friends among whom I pass my Italian year will find embodied their own opinions regarding their own affairs.

Printed by
Morrison & Gibb Limited
Edinburgh

THE ENGLISH COURT IN EXILE

JAMES II. AT ST GERMAIN

BY

EDWIN AND MARION SHARPE GREW

AUTHORS OF "THE COURT OF WILLIAM III."

With 16 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 15s. net

"THE Court of William III.," by the same authors, described the advent of the Prince of Orange. In the present volume the fortunes of the exiled king, James II., and his Italian wife are followed through the subsequent years which he spent in France, whilst fruitlessly endeavouring to regain his throne. James and his consort were received in France by Louis XIV. with magnificent hospitality. The Roi Soleil placed at their disposal the Château of St Germain-en-Laye, and fitted up their refuge lavishly. Here, during the remaining years of his life, James II. and his family were the guests of the French king, whose generosity to his pensioners never failed. The life of the last Stuarts at St Germain is described in the present volume—from the Queen's letters, the King's memoirs, and from records left in manuscript or diary by a number of contemporary writers—and the result is an interesting picture, not merely of the French Court, but of another royal court planted, as it were, in the French Court's midst.

The little Court of St Germain was a melancholy thing, notwithstanding its share in all the gaieties of Versailles. All James's attempts to regain his kingdom were unsuccessful, in spite of his loyal adherents, to say nothing of the crowd of adventurers who flocked to St Germain. An account of his principal campaign, in Ireland, drawn, like the rest of the book, from contemporary records, forms a valuable feature of the volume.

BY THE SAME AUTHORS

THE COURT OF WILLIAM III.

With 16 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 15s. net

Morning Post.—"Done with fairness and thoroughness. . . . The book has many conspicuous merits. There are many good stories scattered through the book, and the text of Lilli Bulero, which, as its author declared, had 'sung a king out of three kingdoms.'"

Times.—"The Authors have steered most dexterously between the solidity of history and the irresponsibility of court biography. Their book consists of a number of character studies done with care and distinction ; it is a welcome change from the mass of literature whose only function is to revive the gossip and scandal centred round a throne."

Spectator.—"A book to be read."

MILLS & BOON, LTD., 49 RUPERT STREET, LONDON, W.

FORTY YEARS OF SONG

BY

MADAME ALBANI

With a Frontispiece in Photogravure

16 Illustrations and many Facsimiles. Demy 8vo. **10s. 6d. net**

As "Queen of Song," Madame Albani has reigned for forty years in the hearts of audiences in every quarter of the globe. The story of her career is a romantic one. It began with a childhood that was devoted assiduously to study, a devotion she has maintained through all the years of her success. Her father, Mr Joseph Lajeunesse, was responsible for her early musical education; later she studied with Duprez in Paris, but to Lamperti may be ascribed the credit of having launched the young diva on the road to fame. Her debut was made at Messina in 1870, and her first appearance in London was at Covent Garden in 1872, when she scored an instantaneous success. Madame Albani has found time to make a host of friends, amongst whom was the late Queen Victoria, from whom Madame Albani received many autographed letters, some of which are reproduced in these pages. Personal mementoes and autographs of musical friends and acquaintances, such as Rubinstein, Sarasate, Paderewski, Elgar, and others, form an interesting feature of the book, which, besides being an earnest and sincere account of a great career, contains many amusing and intimate anecdotes of well-known people.

SIXTY-EIGHT YEARS ON THE STAGE

BY

MRS CHARLES CALVERT

With a Frontispiece in Photogravure

20 Illustrations and many Facsimiles. Demy 8vo. **10s. 6d. net**

It is nearly seventy years ago since Mrs Calvert made her first appearance at the age of six, and she is acting still! As a recent writer has it, "she is a kind of W. G. Grace of the stage." The list of famous people whom she has met during her long career is a very extensive one, and of all of them Mrs Calvert has many interesting things to tell. During the 'sixties and 'seventies her husband, Mr Charles Calvert, was the centre of dramatic life in Manchester, when during his management the Prince's Theatre attained so high a level of excellence, and here Mrs Calvert came into contact with Phelps, Toole, E. A. Sothern, Tom Taylor, Irving, and many others whose names are famous. Since then she has played many parts both in England and America, and her fifteen years' work on the London stage is well known, her most recent appearance being in Sir Herbert Tree's sumptuous production of "Henry VIII." at His Majesty's Theatre.

The book is profusely illustrated with portraits, playbills, etc., and contains many interesting facsimile letters from notable people.

MILLS & BOON, LTD., 49 RUPERT STREET, LONDON, W.

A Catalogue of Books
published by
Mills & Boon Ltd.

49 RUPERT STREET, LONDON, W.
(Close to Piccadilly Circus Tube Station.)

Telephone: 5878 Central. *Telegrams: "Millsator, London."*

COLONIAL Editions are issued of all Messrs. Mills & Boon's Novels, and of most of their books in General Literature. In the case of forthcoming books the approximate prices at which they will be published are given. These may be altered before publication.

The Catalogue is divided into two sections: the first (pages 1–21) contains the most recent books and announcements, and the second (pages 22–32) contains the books previously published.

AUTUMN ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The English Court in Exile: James II. at St. Germain.

By MARION and EDWIN SHARPE GREW, Authors of "The Court of William III." With 16 Illustrations. 15*s*. net.

The Court in Exile was the Court of James II., after his flight from England on the arrival of William of Nassau, Prince of Orange. "The Court of William III.," by the same authors, described the advent of the Prince of Orange. In the present volume the fortunes of the exiled King and his Italian wife are followed through the subsequent years which he spent in France, whilst fruitlessly endeavouring to regain his throne. James and his consort were received in France by Louis XIV.

with magnificent hospitality. The Roi Soleil placed at their disposal the ancient and magnificent Château of St. Germain-en-Laye, which looks across the Seine to distant Paris, and fitted up their refuge with lavish and sympathetic hospitality, even to the appointment of a nursery for their children and the provision of a purse of money—placed on the Queen's dressing-table—for her immediate expenses. Here, during the remaining years of his life, James II. and his family were the guests of the French King, whose generosity and fine courtesy to his pensioners never failed. The life of the last Stuarts at St. Germain is described in the present volume—from the Queen's letters, the King's memoirs, and from records left in manuscript or diary by a number of contemporary writers—and the result is a curious picture, not merely of the usages of the French Court, but of their application in matters of etiquette to another royal Court planted, as it were, in the French Court's midst.

The little Court of St. Germain was a melancholy thing, notwithstanding its share in all the splendid gaieties of Versailles. All James's attempts to regain his kingdom were unsuccessful. The chief of these attempts, the journey to Ireland, the campaign there, and the Court at Dublin, are described. A motley crowd of adventurers, as well as loyal and devoted adherents, flocked to St. Germain, and many of them, the most gallant and devoted, were Irishmen. The records and characteristics of these, drawn from contemporary sources, are one of the features of the book.

Sixty-Eight Years on the Stage.

By MRS. CHARLES CALVERT. With a Photogravure and 16 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

Mrs. Calvert may safely be said to have a longer experience of the stage than any actress now living. It is nearly seventy years ago since she made her first appearance at the age of six, and she is acting still! As a recent writer has well put it, "She is a kind of

W. G. Grace of the stage, as astonishing in vitality, and in the long retention of rare gifts." The list of famous people, on and off the stage, whom she has met during her long career is a very extensive one, and of all of them Mrs. Calvert has many intimate and interesting things to tell. For over ten years—during the 'sixties and 'seventies—her husband, Mr. Charles Calvert, was the centre of dramatic life in Manchester, when during his management the Prince's Theatre attained so high a level of excellence and artistic reputation. It was here that Mrs. Calvert came into contact with Phelps, J. L. Toole, E. A. Sothern, Tom Taylor, Henry Irving, and many others whose names are famous in the history of the stage. Since those days she has played many parts both in England and America, and her fifteen years' work on the London stage is well known, her most recent appearance being in Sir Herbert Tree's sumptuous production of *Henry VIII.* at His Majesty's Theatre.

The book is profusely illustrated with portraits, playbills, etc., and contains many interesting facsimile letters from notable people.

Forty Years of Song.

By EMMA ALBANI. With a Frontispiece in Photogravure and many Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

The proud title of "Queen of Song" is one to which Madame Albani may justly lay claim. As Queen of Song she has reigned for forty years in the hearts of audiences in every quarter of the globe. Canada is the land that has the honour of having given her birth, so that the famous singer is a British subject and a true daughter of the Empire. The story of her career is a romantic one. It began with a childhood that was devoted assiduously and conscientiously to study, a devotion, it may be said, that she has maintained through all the years of her success. Her father, Mr. Joseph Lajeunesse, an accomplished musician, was responsible for her early musical education; later she studied for a year with Duprez in Paris, but Lamperti, "the very first master in the world," is the teacher to whom may be ascribed the credit of having launched the young diva on the road to fame. Her debut was made at Messina in 1870, and her first appearance in London was at Covent Garden in 1872, when she scored an instantaneous success. In spite of a very strenuous life of work and study, Madame Albani has found time to make a host of friends, amongst whom was the late Queen Victoria, who retained a warm personal affection for the great singer, and from whom Madame Albani received many autographed letters, some of which are reproduced in these pages. The number of famous musicians with whom she has come in contact is a very large one; personal mementoes and autographs of such men as Rubinstein, Sarasate, Paderewski, Elgar, and others form an interesting feature of the book, which, besides being an earnest and sincere account of a great career, contains many amusing and intimate anecdotes of well-known people that make it very pleasant reading.

My Italian Year.

By RICHARD BAGOT, Author of "Casting of Nets," "A Roman Mystery," "Donna Diana," "The Lakes of Northern Italy," "The House of Serravalle," etc. With 24 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

Mr. Bagot's novels dealing with Italian life are well known to lovers of Italy. The greater part of his life has been spent in that country, and probably there is no English writer who has a more profound knowledge of the Italians or who has so identified himself with Italian matters. In "My Italian Year" Mr. Bagot aims at giving his readers a faithful portrait of modern Italian life, and for this reason he does not occupy himself with its past history or traditions except in so far as these bear directly on the subject to which he has confined himself. The author presents Italian life of to-day from the Italian and not from the Anglo-

Saxon point of view He takes us through the length and breadth of the Italian kingdom, and introduces us to all phases of its social life, from the highest to the lowest. He gives us, too, not only a sympathetic and unprejudiced impression of that life, but also the impressions of Italians on life in England—thus bringing into interesting relief the difference between Anglo-Saxon and Latin ideals.

Mr. Bagot's criticisms are at least based upon a long and intimate friendship with the people about whom he writes; and he is very careful to explain to us that when fidelity to his subject sometimes compels him to say hard things, he is merely re-echoing the sentiments of Italians themselves towards evils which they would gladly see eradicated from their midst. Although written in a style which is almost conversational, " My Italian Year " contains much curious information regarding the manners and customs of Italian life both in town and country, and there is scarcely a feature in that life upon which it does not touch.

Real Love-Letters.

By E. KEBLE CHATTERTON, Author of " Sailing Ships," " The Story of the British Navy." With 12 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

One of the most striking aspects of history consists in the fact that in spite of all the manifold changes and developments which take place from century to century, there still remains one immutable factor to be reckoned with, viz. humanity. Between the people of yesterday and to-day there is but little difference if we omit externals; and this is no less true of that section of humanity which is of royal blood.

In this volume has been gathered together a collection of authentic historic love-letters written by some of the most prominent personalities of the Royal Houses of Europe, to show that there is every bit as much romance in the epistles of royal lovers as could be found in any letters of less exalted couples.

And yet these love-letters are not confined to any particular period, but cover centuries. In order to enable the reader to appreciate fully the matter contained in the correspondence, Mr. Chatterton, besides being responsible for the compiling and editing of this collection, has added a number of introductions to the various episodes, giving an outline of the essential features of each romance.

The Wonderful Weald and the Quest of the Crock of Gold.

By ARTHUR BECKETT, Author of "The Spirit of the Downs," "Emancipation," etc. With 20 Illustrations in colour and 43 Initials by ERNEST MARILLIER. Demy 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

"The Wonderful Weald" is the record of a twentieth-century springtime pilgrimage made in the Weald of Sussex. In the spirit of the questors of the Holy Grail the author describes how, with his companion, he set out on pilgrimage, intent upon the quest of the crock of gold, which, as all good Sussex people are aware, lies at the foot of the rainbow. The pilgrims cut themselves adrift from the modern world, taking their packs with them on the back of an ass, leaving the high road to seek romance in the lanes and byways, the woods and forests of the wonderful weald of Sussex.

The result was that they met with an astonishing number of adventures, in which enchanted castles, forests, and other places play a part, all of which are as real to the adventurer of to-day (who seeks them in the proper spirit) as they were to the pilgrims of the Middle Ages. The author has been so long familiar with the legends and historical facts peculiar to the county of Sussex that he has been able to present them as a series of romantic and truthful pictures, diversified by both humorous and pathetic sketches of the Wealden peasantry as they are to be found to-day. Wealden places are made familiar to the reader by the dramatic presentation of the principal events associated with them. The book is in fact a successful knitting together of the romantic and realistic in the Wonderful Weald in scenes in which personal experiences are always prominent. In other words, the whole work is a blending of fact and fiction in which the actual events of Sussex history, customs, and folk-lore play a part and are given a personal value.

"The Wonderful Weald" is illustrated by Mr. Ernest Marillier, an artist who has been engaged for many years in painting Sussex scenes, and whose lightness of "touch" is an admirable complement to Mr. Beckett's narrative.

A Century of Actors, 1750-1850.

By CECIL ARMSTRONG, Author of "The Dramatic Author's Companion," etc. With 16 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

Turkey and the Turks.

By Z. D. FERRIMAN, Author of "Home Life in Hellas." With 16 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

"Turkey and the Turks" is a volume by the author of "Home Life in Hellas," which was one of the best-reviewed volumes of 1910.

Mr. Ferriman knows Turkey intimately, and has lived there for considerable periods during the last ten years.

The volume will deal most thoroughly with Turkish life at the present day, and will include chapters on the harem, mosques, food, dress, family events, etc.

The Town of Morality: or, The Narrative of One who Lived Here for a Time.

By C. H. R. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

It is impossible to sketch the outline of this literary phenomenon, which deals with the great problem of humanity and religion, the eternal struggle between the spiritual and the material. "The Town of

Morality" will appeal with irresistible attraction to the Anglican, Nonconformist, and Roman Catholic; to the Agnostic and the Bigot; to the worldling and the religous.

A Souvenir Chapter will be sent post free to any address.

Out of the Ivory Palaces.

By P. H. DITCHFIELD, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.S.L., F.R.Hist.S., Author of "The Parson's Pleasance," "The Old-Time Parson," etc. With 12 Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

The many readers of "The Parson's Pleasance" will be glad to welcome this new volume of lighter studies by the same author. As a kindly reviewer stated of its predecessor, "All lovers of the literary essay will here find a book after their own hearts," so will its readers say of Mr. Ditchfield's new volume. He conducts us through many pleasant "Ivory Palaces," the palaces of fancy and memory, and tells us of the old Manor House and its belongings, opens the family deed chest and discloses its many curious contents. Especially interesting are the diary of an old Indian Mutiny hero, discovered in a cottage, and an account of the earthquake at Lisbon in 1755, written by a survivor, a battered MS. found amongst the papers of the late Sir Francis Barry, Bart. He revels in the palaces of books, in old book-shops and the British Museum, finding many treasures, and then takes us into the open air, on the breezy downs, and discovers pre-historic palaces, the home of the flint collector. He wanders through some episcopal palaces, and visits palaces of refuge, the old sanctuaries and leper-houses. There is also a section of the book devoted to the guarding of the gates, telling how the Elizabethan ballad-makers sang when the Armada threatened our shores, how the sea threatens them to-day, and what would happen if a foreign foe secured a landing. Things "new and old" out of the ivory palaces will delight and amuse the many readers who appreciate the works of this writer.

Nerves and the Nervous.

By EDWIN ASH, M.D. (Lond.), Assistant Physician Italian Hospital, London; sometime Clinical Assistant West End Hospital for Nervous Diseases. Author of "Mind and Health." Crown 8vo. 5*s*. net.

"Nerves and the Nervous" deals in popular language with a very prevalent ailment and its causes. Consideration is given to the various faults in our daily lives that predispose to disordered nerves, and to the effects of work, worry, ambition, sex-problems, and so forth in upsetting the normal harmony of the nervous system. Want of nerve-tone, leading in many cases to serious nervous exhaustion—neurasthenia—is an important factor in reducing the nation's "driving-force" at the present time—and the prevention of an increase in the number of nervous people is a matter of vast importance. This book will be extremely useful to *all who have to do with the nervous*, as it discusses at length the care of those afflicted with "nerves"; moreover, a lengthy chapter on "Self-help for the Nervous" should make it a valuable stand-by to many. At the same time parents will find a variety of useful hints on the *upbringing of nervous children*, a matter of great consideration to those who wish to reduce the amount of nervousness found in the adult population to-day.

The subject of psychic healing, which has been very much to the front lately, will be fully discussed in its relation to disordered "nerves" in the chapter on "Psychotherapeutics"—hypnotism, suggestion, and so-called animal magnetism being considered as therapeutic agents.

On the whole this work will undoubtedly be of the greatest practical value to a great many people who are worried either by their own nerves or by the nerve-troubles of their friends and relations.

The Zoo Conversation Book.

By EDMUND SELOUS, Author of "Tommy Smith's Animals." With 12 Full-Page Illustrations by J. A. SHEPHEARD. Crown 8vo. 5*s*. net.

The mine of information and interest which we possess in the Gardens of the Zoological Society, could its inmates once be induced to speak for and of themselves, has hitherto escaped attention—at any rate no serious effort in this direction appears to have been made, even at a time of day when the "dumb animal," once so much in evidence, has become almost obsolete. It occurred to the author that if the right sort of child—for everything depends upon that—were sent in the capacity of interviewer, results might be in accordance, and the volume which he has been enabled thus to produce shows that this expectation—amounting almost to a conviction on his part—has been realised. It presents to the public the first-fruits of the communications which have been elicited in this ingenious, yet withal simple, manner, and the interest attaching, in varying degrees, to the information contained therein is increased by its first-hand character and the touch of personality which is thus imparted to it. Believers in the animal heart and intelligence will be delighted to find how far in both these departments, as well as in other directions, "our talkative friends" have progressed.

Stories from Italian History Re-told for Children.

By G. E. TROUTBECK, Author of "The Children's Story of Westminster Abbey." With a Frontispiece in Photogravure and 24 full-page Illustrations from Photographs. Crown 8vo. 5*s*. net.

These stories are chosen with a view to interesting boys and girls in some of the notable persons and important periods in Italian history. The chapters are not supposed to form a consecutive whole, but various subjects likely to be attractive to young readers have been selected, mainly from early and mediæval times. It is hoped that these stories, re-told in short and simple form, may give English-speaking children the wish to learn more about the beautiful country to which Europe owes so much in science, in art, in literature, and in religion. The book deals with persons rather than with places, as being more likely to appeal to those for whom it is intended and more likely to stimulate them to further study.

Canned Classics, and Other Verses.

By HARRY GRAHAM, Author of "Deportmental Ditties," "The Bolster Book," etc., etc. Profusely Illustrated by LEWIS BAUMER. Crown 4to. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

"Canned Classics," as its name implies, is an attempt to save both time and trouble by condensing into tabloid form some of the masterpieces of English literature with which every educated person is erroneously deemed to be thoroughly acquainted. In this age of hurry and over-work it is difficult for busy people to find time to study the English classics as fully as they might wish. In his new book Captain Graham has, therefore, endeavoured to supply a long-felt want by providing the reader with an opportunity of becoming acquainted with some of those *chefs d'œuvres* of famous authors whose names are household words, but whose works are but superficially known to the general public. Such books as "David Copperfield," "Vanity Fair," "The Prisoner of Zenda," and "Three Weeks" are compressed within the limits of short poems, a brief perusal of which will thus enable the reader to claim acquaintance with the works of those masters of English fiction whom he has hitherto had neither the time nor the inclination to study with the care that they undoubtedly deserve. The "Canned Classics" are profusely illustrated by Mr. Lewis Baumer, the famous *Punch* artist, and are supplemented by a number of "Other Verses," notably a series entitled "The Seven Deadly Virtues," written in that frivolous and vivacious style with which the readers of Captain Graham's numerous volumes of verse are already familiar.

Deportmental Ditties.

By HARRY GRAHAM. Profusely Illustrated by LEWIS BAUMER. Fcap. 8vo. Third Edition. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

A pocket edition, revised and enlarged, of this enormously successful light verse volume.

Queery Leary Nonsense.

Being a Lear Nonsense Book, with a long Introduction and Notes by the LORD CROMER, and edited by LADY STRACHEY of Sutton Court. With about 50 Illustrations in colour and line. Crown 4to. 3*s*. 6*d*. net.

"Queery Leary Nonsense" will be the Christmas Gift Book of 1911. It is a volume full of humour and high spirits, and can safely be given to either children or grown-ups, who are all certain to be amused and interested by this quaint and exceedingly droll volume.

Lord Cromer's Introduction is one of considerable length, and contains text illustrations of Lear's humorous pictures.

"Queery Leary Nonsense" will also contain Lord Cromer's Coloured Bird Book, which all parents will find indispensable for teaching children colour. Lear's illustrations to the Bird portion of the book are extremely quaint and humorous.

Lady Strachey has made a fine collection of Lear's pictures, mainly humorous, and is to be congratuated on a decidedly interesting and original volume.

Child-Nurture: Mental and Physical.

A Book for Parents and Teachers. By HONNOR MORTEN, Author of "The Nursery Nurse's Companion," "The Nurse's Dictionary." Illustrated. Crown 8vo. 3*s*. 6*d*. net.

Chapters: Introduction—History of Child Study—Heredity and Environment—The Infant—Growth of Body (Physiology)—Growth of Mind (Psychology)—Moral Training—School Days—The Value of Play—The Homeless Child—Appendices: List of Societies, books, technical terms, etc., etc.—Index.

The Garden of Song.

Edited by HAROLD SIMPSON. Fcap. 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

This is a representative collection of lyrics arranged in a very attractive fashion, and contains, for the most part, the lyrics of songs that have enjoyed a wide popularity at one period or another. At the same time the artistic excellence of the lyric itself, apart from its popularity in musical form, has always been taken into account by the editor in making his selection from the almost limitless material at his disposal. Only the lyrics of songs that have actually been published are included. This book will be found invaluable to singers and to lovers of poetry.

A Little Girls' Cookery Book.

By C. H. BENTON and MARY F. HODGE. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

"A Little Girls' Cookery Book" is a volume containing excellent recipes for dishes which children will find quite easy to make and their elders delightful to eat. Every father, mother, uncle, and aunt should make a point of giving their child friends a copy of this useful and practical book.

The Householder's Companion.

By FRANCIS MINTON, M.A. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.
(Mills & Boon's Companion Series.)

Every householder has manifold rights, duties, and liabilities, and the purpose of this book is to afford him (or her) useful advice in securing and conducting the dwelling in which he makes his home. While it does not presume to be a complete *resumé* of the complex legislative system in which the English householder is involved, yet the legal statements contained therein will, it is hoped, prove not less helpful than the practical hints with which they are interspersed. It deals with varied topics such as the selection and purchase of a residence, the rules as to domestic servants, jury service, drainage, insurance, etc., etc., and without obtruding technicalities it aims at putting the reader into possession of the practical experience of a man who is at once a lawyer and a householder of long standing.

The Beekeeper's Companion.

By S. SHAPLAND ABBOTT. With 18 Illustrations. Crown 8vo. Paper, 1*s*. net; cloth, 1*s*. 6*d*. net.
(Mills & Boon's Companion Series.)

The Actor's Companion.

By "GENERAL UTILITY," Author of "The Dramatic Author's Companion." 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

(Mills & Boon's Companion Series.)

MILLS & BOON'S

RAMBLES SERIES

Crown 8vo. 6*s*. each.

With about 40 Illustrations in Colour and from Photographs

Rambles Around French Châteaux.

By FRANCES M. GOSTLING, Author of "The Bretons at Home."

Rambles in the Black Forest.

By I. A. R. WYLIE, Author of "My German Year."

Rambles in Irish Ways.

By ROBERT LYND, Author of "Home Life in Ireland."

Rambles with an American in Great Britain.

By CHRISTIAN TEARLE, Author of "Holborn Hill."

Other Volumes are in Preparation.

MILLS & BOON'S

POCKET TIP BOOKS

The Golfer's Pocket Tip Book.

By the Authors of "The Six Handicap Golfer's Companion." Fully Illustrated. 5*s*. net.

"The Golfer's Pocket Tip Book" provides for the player who is "off" his game, a source whence he may extract remedies for those faults of whose existence he is only too well aware, but for which he has hitherto been unsuccessful in finding either a prevention or a cure. The book contains many capital photographs illustrating the essential points of the golfing stroke, and on the opposite page will be found a few short sentences to explain those points to which the photographs are intended to call attention.

The various strokes depicted have each been chosen with the definite object of demonstrating some one faulty action, maybe of hand or foot; and in many cases both the correct and faulty methods have been illustrated and explained. It is a recognised fact that correct "timing" rather than physical strength makes for success in golf; therefore great stress has been laid both on the methods of playing which conduce to efficiency in this respect and on those which prevent it. Thus a complete series will be found in illustration of perfect foot-action and the particular function of hand, wrist, and body.

Special attention has been bestowed on the art of putting, and the series of photographs relating thereto is more complete than any which has as yet been presented to the student of golf. The accompanying words of wisdom emanate from Jack White, who both in theory and practice excels all others in this department of the game.

The Motorist's Pocket Tip Book.

By GEOFFREY OSBORN. With 13 full-page Illustrations. Leather Case. 5*s*. net.

The author of this book, an engineer by profession, has had a large and varied experience of all types of cars in several countries. He has compressed his knowledge into the pages of this book in such a manner that the points required to be elucidated can instantly be found, and if further explanation be required, the reader has only to turn to the chapter immediately preceding to find the reasons why and wherefore.

MILLS & BOON'S
AUTUMN NOVELS

A Charming Novel.

Love in a Little Town.

By J. E. BUCKROSE, Author of "Down Our Street."
Crown 8vo. 6*s*

"Love in a Little Town" is a comedy about that flowery and intangible thing, the love of a real girl. There are many characters in it, each quite clearly and vividly distinct, and the heroine is a spoilt heiress who is sent back to the little town to find reality among her grandfather's people. How she bears the immense change from wealth and position to Mr. Wallerby's circle and surroundings—whether the lover proves faithful under the altered conditions—and what Celia really finds in the little town, are the questions upon which the story hangs. An atmosphere of freshness and young love and country lanes is over the whole book, for such a little English town as this is not so much a town as the country gathered close and intensified—more absolutely rural, in a way, than the open fields themselves.

Mills & Boon confidently recommend "Love in a Little Town" as one of the most delightful novels of recent years.

The "Mary-up-at-Gaffries" Successor.

Ripe Corn.

By S. C. NETHERSOLE. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

A novel of country life; a study of temperament. Yeoman Laqueste of Strete, and Master of Strete Harriers, takes over Apuldowne from his thriftless nephew, Edward Laqueste, to give it back later as a wedding gift to that nephew's son, Jim, whom he adopts from boyhood. Jim Laqueste, a shy, silent boy, shows a whole-hearted devotion to Jane Tallboys, a fascinating little person who trips in and out of the earlier chapters of the book, more soberly towards the end; she becomes a special "pal" of old Yeoman Laqueste, and, after her mother's death, like a daughter to the Rector of Salt and Mrs. Trankett. The course of true love is interrupted by Missie Trankett, who sets her heart on winning Jim Laqueste, and succeeds as the price of her silence when she discovers his mother's theft of jewellery. The marriage ends tragically, with Missie's death in a railway collision, when, scared at a diphtheria epidemic in the village, she is hurrying away with Patience, her little child. Other carefully drawn characters are Edward Laqueste and his wife; the Rector of Salt and Mrs. Trankett; their son Theodore; William Tallboys of Top-o'-th' Hill; Henry Turnpenny, the saintly carpenter; the widow Matchett of the carpenter's yard. The river, which flows past Apuldowne, exercises a curious influence over these people.

The Palace of Logs.

By ROBERT BARR, Author of "Cardillac" and "The Sword Maker." Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

The Earthen Drum.

By E. S. STEVENS, Author of "The Veil," "The Mountain of God." With 6 Illustrations in Colour. Crown 8vo. 6s.

The Eastern story-teller, in the idle hours of the day—and any hour may be idle beneath an African sun—summons his audience by beating rhythmically upon an earthen drum. The collection of stories here set forth by the author of "The Veil" embraces tales grave and gay, romances and adventures such as the ingenious Arabian told her Lord, the Commander of the Faithful; histories of yesterday and tales of to-day; but through them all may be distinguished the story-teller's drum, as his audience gathers in the shade of the market-place; and each is fragrant with the odours, spicy and opiate, of the eternal East—whether the scene be laid in a desert town, or an Egyptian village, a far oasis, a camel mart, or beneath the Syrian hills. "Zohara of the Flutes," "The Blind Girl Zeyda," "Perihan the Hothouse Plant," "Zuleikha the Abyssinian," "Hamida the Beautiful," "Brahime in Search of a Wife," and "Mansour the Merchant," show that men and women's hearts beat to the same measure in the harem as in the ballroom, beneath the mantle of the desert and the overcoat of London or Paris.

The Oriental story-teller's art is to concentrate his hearer's attention for a brief space upon the world of dramatic fancies; to awaken his emotions, to stir his pity or awake his laughter; and, withal, to set his little history in a form as clear-cut and dainty as that of a cameo. This, too, is the object of "The Earthen Drum."

Laughter and Delight.

Toddie.

By GILBERT WATSON. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Toddie is just a simple little soul—only a caddie—full of faults, fond of a dog, and the great hero worshipper of his golfing master. Toddie fell in love (and didn't know it) with a golden-hearted girl, the tall, dark-eyed, buxom Scotch lass Devina. Well, Devina fell in love with Toddie (she, too, didn't know it), and they met and met and met—in the kitchen, by the fireside, on the heather, by the seashore, day by day, and yet neither guessed. It made Toddie feel so peculiar, that he did a thing unheard of with him, he went to church. To tell you more of their love-story would hardly be fair to them, but you ought to know it ended happily, and in quite a novel way.

"Toddie" as a humorous novel is the *real* thing; charming, tender, pathetic, romantic.

Mills & Boon's reader reported that he read "Toddie" at one sitting, and then read it all over again.

The Ealing Miracle.

By HORACE W. C. NEWTE, Author of "Sparrows," "Calico Jack," etc. Crown 8vo. *6s.*

The tribulations and temptations of London's underpaid and unprotected women workers was the subject of Mr. Newte's novel, "Sparrows," which created such a sensation both in this country and America. The same theme occupies much of his new story, "The Ealing Miracle," although, in other respects, the narrative runs on wholly different lines.

The Love Story of a Mormon.

By WINIFRED GRAHAM, Author of "Mary." With a Preface by the Rt. Rev. BISHOP WELLDON, Dean of Manchester. Crown 8vo. *6s.*

A Remarkable Novel.

When the Red Gods Call.

By BEATRICE GRIMSHAW. Crown 8vo. *6s.*

"When the Red Gods Call" is a fascinating and absorbing story of a young Englishman who meets with the most extraordinary adventures in New Guinea. The publishers believe it is one of the most promising novels of recent years, for in it all the finer literary qualities are displayed.

Mills & Boon are confident that this very striking and arresting piece of work will be one of the great successes of 1911.

The Summer Book. (Stories.)

By MAX PEMBERTON, Author of "The Adventures of Captain Jack," "Kronstadt." Crown 8vo. *6s.*

In Different Keys. (Stories.)

By I. A. R. WYLIE, Author of "The Rajah's People," "Dividing Waters." Crown 8vo. *6s.*

A Creature of Circumstance.

By LADY TROUBRIDGE, Author of "Body and Soul," "The Woman Who Forgot." Crown 8vo. *6s.*

Pollyooly.

By EDGAR JEPSON, Author of "Lady Noggs." Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

A Fine Novel.

A Sereshan.

By M. HARTLEY. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Likeness.

By EDITH DART, Author of "Rebecca Drew." Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

All Awry.

By MAUDE ANNESLEY, Author of "Wind Along the Waste." Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

"All Awry" is a striking and vivacious novel of modern life, telling with delightful humour and originality the strange adventures of Clo Mayne, a country girl, and daughter of Admiral Sir Allison Mayne. Clo from her childhood has been brought up as a boy, thinks as a boy, fights as a boy, and later becomes furious when folks try to convince her that there is any such thing as sex attraction. Clo hates society and the attentions men pay her, and longs for the sea. One day, through the kind help of an old friend, she joins a big ship as assistant purser. Clo's exciting adventures as a man, through bright and dark days on the sea, are intensely interesting, and so remarkable that the reader will not be able to put the book down until the happy love ending on the last page is reached. Mills & Boon thoroughly recommend "All Awry" as one of the finest novels of the year.

Nigel Ferrard.

By MRS. BAILLIE REYNOLDS. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

Some years ago Mrs. Baillie Reynolds (the author of that delightful novel "Thalassa!") wrote a book entitled "Nigel Ferrard," which Mills & Boon are now republishing because they believe it is a story that is equal to the former in every way. They hope the public will make a point of reading the new and revised edition of "Nigel Ferrard."

Our Lady of the Leopards.

By ALBERT DORRINGTON, Author of "Children of the Cloven Hoof." Crown 8vo. *6s.*

A Tropical Tangle.

By LOUISE GERARD, Author of "The Golden Centipede." Crown 8vo. *6s.*

The Choice of Theodora.

By THOMAS COBB, Author of "The Anger of Olivia." Crown 8vo. *6s.*

The Cost.

By L. G. MOBERLY, Author of "Joy." Crown 8vo. *6s.*

Mastering Flame.

ANON. Crown 8vo. *6s.*

The Device of the Black Fox.

By R. A. WOOD-SEYS (Paul Cushing). Crown 8vo. *6s.*

The Year's Round. (Stories.)

By MAUD STEPNEY RAWSON. Crown 8vo. *6s.*

The Yoke of Silence.

By AMY McLAREN, Author of "Bawbee Jock," "The Merry Austrians." Crown 8vo. *5s.*

SHILLING NOVELS

NEW VOLUMES

CALICO JACK	HORACE W. C. NEWTE
THE BILL TOPPERS	ANDRE CASTAIGNE
THE QUAKER GIRL (Novel of the Play) .	HAROLD SIMPSON
THE COUNT OF LUXEMBOURG (Novel of the Play)	HAROLD SIMPSON
MARY UP AT GAFFRIES	S. C. NETHERSOLE
813 (a New Arsène Lupin Adventure) .	MAURICE LEBLANC
THE WOMAN WHO FORGOT . . .	LADY TROUBRIDGE
THE ENEMY OF WOMAN . . .	WINIFRED GRAHAM

(*See also page* 30.)

BOOKS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED

GENERAL LITERATURE

The Court of William III.

By EDWIN and MARION SHARPE GREW. With 16 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 15*s.* net.

Morning Post.—" Done with fairness and thoroughness. . . . The book has many conspicuous merits."

The Story of the British Navy.

By E. KEBLE CHATTERTON, Author of " Sailing Ships." With a Frontispiece in Colour and 50 Illustrations from Photographs. Demy 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

Naval and Military Record.—" Contains practically everything which the average individual wishes to know about the Navy."

Western Morning News.—" A popular story which all Englishmen cannot but read with enthusiasm."

The Parson's Pleasance.

By P. H. DITCHFIELD, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.S.L., F.R.Hist.S., Author of " The Old-time Parson," etc. With 27 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

Daily Telegraph.—" All lovers of the leisurely essay will here find a book after their own hearts."

Wagner at Home.

Fully translated from the French of Judith Gautier by EFFIE DUNREITH MASSIE. With 9 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

Tatler.—" The whole book is very interesting indeed."

Sketch.—" None will have anything but praise for her most illuminating book."

Yvette Guilbert : Struggles and Victories.

By YVETTE GUILBERT and HAROLD SIMPSON. Profusely illustrated with Caricatures, Portraits, Facsimiles of letters, etc. Demy 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

Daily Telegraph.—" The volume is a real delight all through."

Sporting Stories.

By THORMANBY. Fully illustrated. Demy 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

Daily Express.—" Contains the best collection of anecdotes of this generation. It is a perfect mine of good things."

My German Year.

By I. A. R. WYLIE, Author of "The Rajah's People." With 2 Illustrations in Colour and 18 from Photographs. Demy 8vo. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

Evening Standard.—"Should be read by every household in the land."

Westminster Gazette.—"A wise, well-informed, and very readable book."

Forty Years of a Sportsman's Life.

By SIR CLAUDE CHAMPION DE CRESPIGNY, Bart. With 18 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

Daily Mail.—"From cover to cover there is not a dull page."

Sporting Life.—"More enthralling than the most romantic novel."

A Century of Ballads (1810—1910), Their Composers and Singers.

By HAROLD SIMPSON. With 49 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

Daily Express.—"Deals brightly with a most fascinating subject."

Rambles with an American.

By CHRISTIAN TEARLE, Author of "Holborn Hill." With 21 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

Spectator.—"The idea is good, and is well carried out, and a reader, if he is of the right sort, will be greatly charmed with it."

An Art Student's Reminiscences of Paris in the Eighties.

By SHIRLEY FOX, R.B.A. With Illustrations by JOHN CAMERON. Demy 8vo. 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

Home Life in Hellas: Greece and the Greeks.

By Z. DUCKETT FERRIMAN. With 19 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 8*s*. net.

Morning Post.—"Possesses the great merit of being written by an author who not only knows but also sympathises with the people whose life he describes."

British Weekly.—"Full of up-to-date information. It is good as a tourist's handbook, and still better for fireside reading."

My Thirty Years in India.

By Sir EDMUND C. COX, Bart., Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Bombay Presidency. With 6 Illustrations. Demy 8vo. 8*s*. net.

Truth.—" As opportune as it is interesting."

British Mountain Climbs.

By GEORGE D. ABRAHAM, Author of " The Complete Mountaineer." With 18 Illustrations and 21 Outline Drawings of the principal routes. Pocket size. Waterproof cloth. 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

Sportsman.—" Eminently a practical manual."

Swiss Mountain Climbs.

By GEORGE D. ABRAHAM. With 24 Illustrations and 22 Outline Drawings of the principal peaks and their routes. Pocket size. Waterproof cloth. 7*s*. 6*d*. net.

Country Life.—" Mr. Abraham's book should become as essential as good climbing boots."

Home Life in Ireland.

By ROBERT LYND. Illustrated from Photographs. Third and Popular Edition, with a New Preface. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

Spectator.—" An entertaining and informing book, the work of a close and interested observer."

The Romance of the Oxford Colleges.

By FRANCIS GRIBBLE. With a Photogravure and 16 full-page Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

Westminster Gazette.—" Does not contain a dull page."

The Bolster Book. A Book for the Bedside.

By HARRY GRAHAM, Author of " Deportmental Ditties." With an illustrated cover by Lewis Baumer. Third Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

Daily Graphic.—" Most refreshing and delightfully funny."

Letters of a Modern Golfer to his Grandfather.

Being the correspondence of Richard Allingham, Esq., arranged by HENRY LEACH. Crown 8vo. 6*s*.

Outlook.—" A book in which the human interest is as marked as the practical instruction."

Egypt as We Knew It.

By E. L. BUTCHER, Author of "The Story of the Church of Egypt." With 16 Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 5*s*. net.

Spectator.—"A most entertaining book and not a little instructive too."

Auction Bridge.

By ARCHIBALD DUNN. Containing the Revised Rules of the game. Crown 8vo. 5*s*. net. Popular Edition, 3*s*. net.

Sportsman.—"A study of this manual will profit them in knowledge and in pocket."

Club Bridge.

By ARCHIBALD DUNN, Author of "Bridge and How to Play it." Crown 8vo. 5*s*. net. Popular Edition, 3*s*. net.

Evening Standard.—"This is, in fact, 'THE BOOK.'"

Manchester Guardian.—"A masterly and exhaustive treatise."

The Children's Story of Westminster Abbey.

By G. E. TROUTBECK, Author of "Westminster Abbey" (Little Guides). With 4 Photogravure Plates, and 21 Illustrations from Photographs. Crown 8vo. 5*s*. net. Popular Edition, 1*s*. net.

The Children's Story of the Bee.

By S. L. BENSUSAN, Author of "Wild Life Stories." Illustrated by C. MOORE PARK. Crown 8vo. 5*s*. net.

Standard.—"It seems to us that we have all along wanted just precisely the sort of book that Mr. Bensusan has now given us."

The German Spy System in France.

Translated from the French of PAUL LANOIR. Crown 8vo. 5*s*. net.

Standard.—"Ought to engage the serious attention of those responsible for the national security."

Ships and Sealing Wax.

By HANSARD WATT. With 40 Illustrations by L. R. BRIGHTWELL. Uniform with "Deportmental Ditties." Crown 4to. 3*s*. 6*d*. net.

Daily Mail.—"Very clever and amusing, the humour enhanced by quaint illustrations."

Deportmental Ditties.

By HARRY GRAHAM. Illustrated by LEWIS BAUMER. Second Edition. Crown 4to. 3*s.* 6*d.* net. (See page 11.)

A Manual for Nurses.

By SYDNEY WELHAM, M.R.C.S. (Resident Medical Officer, Charing Cross Hospital). With Diagrams. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

British Medical Journal.—Answers to Correspondents, 22nd October 1910.—L. M. writes: "In answer to 'Lecturer' re up-to-date book on Medical Nursing, I have found that Mr. Welham's book 'A Manual for Nurses' a most excellent volume. It is very readable, quite up-to-date, and efficient."

Through the Loopholes of Retreat.

By HANSARD WATT. With a Portrait of COWPER in Photogravure. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.* net.

Kings and Queens of France.

A Concise History of France.

By MILDRED CARNEGY. With a Preface by the BISHOP OF HEREFORD. With a Map and four full-page Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Peter Pan: The Fairy Story of the Play.

By G. D. DRENNAN. With a Photogravure of Miss PAULINE CHASE as Peter Pan. Fcap. 8vo. Leather, 2*s.* 6*d.* net. Theatre Edition, Paper, 1*s.* net.

The Pocket Gladstone: Selections from the Writings and Speeches of William Ewart Gladstone.

Compiled by J. AUBREY REES (National League of Young Liberals), with an Introduction by the Rt. Hon. Sir ALGERNON WEST, P.C., G.C.B. Fcap. 8vo. Cloth, 2*s.* net. Paper, 1*s.* net.

Pure Folly: The Story of "THE FOLLIES."

Told by FITZROY GARDNER. With many illustrations. Crown 4to. 2*s.* 6*d.* net. Popular Edition, 1*s.* net.

Popular Edition. Fifteenth Thousand.

The New Theology.

By the REV. R. J. CAMPBELL. Fully revised and with a New Preface. Crown 8vo. 1*s.* net.

Votes for Women. A Play in Three Acts.

By ELIZABETH ROBINS. Crown 8vo. 1*s.*

MILLS & BOON'S
COMPANION SERIES

This series of practical handbooks is confidently recommended to the public by MESSRS. MILLS & BOON, for, as every book is by an expert, and all are written in simple and untechnical language, they are confident that they will appeal to that large class who want an easily read and instructive book written by a person who thoroughly understands his subject.

THE NURSERY NURSE'S COMPANION.
By HONNOR MORTEN. Crown 8vo. Cloth, 1*s*. 6*d*. net; paper, 1*s*. net.

THE FOOD REFORMER'S COMPANION.
By EUSTACE MILES, M.A. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

THE MOTHER'S COMPANION.
By Mrs. M. A. CLOUDESLEY-BRERETON (Officier d'Académie). With an Introduction by Sir LAUDER BRUNTON, M.D., F.R.C.P., F.R.S. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

THE CHAUFFEUR'S COMPANION.
By "A FOUR-INCH DRIVER." With 4 Plates and 5 Diagrams. Waterproof cloth. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. net.

THE LADY MOTORIST'S COMPANION.
By "A FOUR-INCH DRIVER." With Plates and Diagrams. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

THE SIX HANDICAP GOLFER'S COMPANION.
By "TWO OF HIS KIND." With Chapters by H. S. COLT and HAROLD H. HILTON (*ex open and amateur champion*). Illustrated with 15 Photographs of JACK WHITE (*ex open champion*). Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

THE RIFLEMAN'S COMPANION.
By L. R. TIPPINS. With 6 Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

THE AVIATOR'S COMPANION.
By D. and HENRY FARMAN and Others. With 21 Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

THE POULTRY-KEEPER'S COMPANION.
By ARTHUR TYSILIO JOHNSON. With 60 Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

THE GARDENER'S COMPANION.
By SELINA RANDOLPH. With an Introduction by LADY ALWYNE COMPTON. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. net.

THE FISHERMAN'S COMPANION.
By E. LE BRETON-MARTIN. With 17 Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

THE DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S COMPANION.
By CECIL ARMSTRONG. With an Introduction by ARTHUR BOURCHIER, M.A. Crown 8vo. 2*s*. 6*d*. net.

For other books of this Series see pp. 13-14.

MILLS & BOON'S

FICTION LIST

Crown 8vo. 6s. each.

Some Experiences of a Political Agent		Anon.
Orpheus in Mayfair	*2nd Edition*	Maurice Baring.
Two Men and Gwenda		M. Barnes-Grundy.
Cardillac	*5th Edition*	Robert Barr.
The Sword Maker	*3rd Edition*	Robert Barr.
The Glen		Mary Stuart Boyd.
A Golden Straw	*2nd Edition*	J. E. Buckrose.
The Pilgrimage of a Fool	*2nd Edition*	J. E. Buckrose.
Down Our Street	*4th Edition*	J. E. Buckrose.
Render unto Caesar		Mrs. Vere Campbell.
The Bill-Toppers		André Castaigne.
The Vanishing Smuggler		Stephen Chalmers.
The Prodigal Father	*4th Edition*	J. Storer Clouston.
The Anger of Olivia	*2nd Edition*	Thomas Cobb.
Mr. Burnside's Responsibility		Thomas Cobb.
Margaret Rutland		Thomas Cobb.
Phillida		Thomas Cobb.
Blue Grey Magic		Sophie Cole.
A Wardour Street Idyll		Sophie Cole.
Arrows from the Dark		Sophie Cole.
The Valley of Achor		Mrs. P. Champion de Crespigny.
Fame	*3rd Edition*	B. M. Croker.
Rebecca Drew		Edith Dart.
The Education of Jacqueline	*3rd Edition*	Claire de Pratz.
Elisabeth Davenay	*3rd Edition*	Claire de Pratz.
Children of the Cloven Hoof		Albert Dorrington.
The Lady Calphurnia Royal		Albert Dorrington and A. G. Stephens.
My Lady Wentworth		Allan Fea.
The Leech		Mrs. Harold E. Gorst.
The Enemy of Woman	*3rd Edition*	Winifred Graham.
Mary	*4th Edition*	Winifred Graham.
The Needlewoman		Winifred Graham.
The End and the Beginning.	3s. 6d.	Cosmo Hamilton.
Brummell Again		Cosmo Hamilton.
By Force of Circumstances		Gordon Holmes.

MILLS & BOON'S FICTION LIST—*continued*

Margot Munro		M. E. Hughes.
No. 19	*2nd Edition*	Edgar Jepson.
Captain Sentimental		Edgar Jepson.
Arsène Lupin		Edgar Jepson and Maurice Leblanc.
Jehanne of the Golden Lips	*2nd Edition*	F. G. Knowles-Foster.
813	*2nd Edition*	Maurice Leblanc.
The Phantom of the Opera		Gaston Leroux.
Bound Together	*2nd Edition*	Mary E. Mann.
The Last Lord Avanley		Gerald Maxwell.
Mary up at Gaffries	*4th Edition*	S. C. Nethersole.
Calico Jack	*3rd Edition*	Horace W. C. Newte.
The Sins of the Children	*2nd Edition*	Horace W. C. Newte.
The Socialist Countess		Horace W. C. Newte.
With Poison and Sword		W. M. O'Kane.
Draw in Your Stool		Oliver Onions.
Harm's Way		Lloyd Osbourne.
The Kingdom of Earth	*2nd Edition*	Anthony Partridge.
The Adventures of Captain Jack	*3rd Edition*	Max Pemberton.
The Stairway of Honour	*2nd Edition*	Maud Stepney Rawson.
The Queen's Hand	*2nd Edition*	Mrs. Baillie Reynolds.
The Sea-Lion	*2nd Edition*	Patrick Rushden.
Sport of Gods	*2nd Edition*	H. Vaughan-Sawyer.
Miss Pilsbury's Fortune		Christine R. Shand.
Odd Come Shorts	*2nd Edition*	Mrs. Alfred Sidgwick.
Isabel		Dorothy V. Horace Smith.
When Love Knocks		Gilbert Stanhope.
The Veil	*7th Edition*	E. S. Stevens.
The Mountain of God	*4th Edition*	E. S. Stevens.
Holborn Hill		Christian Tearle.
Written in the Rain		John Trevena.
The Woman who Forgot		Lady Troubridge
The First Law	*2nd Edition*	Lady Troubridge.
The Cheat		Lady Troubridge.
Body and Soul	*2nd Edition*	Lady Troubridge.
The Fool of Faery		M. Urquhart.
The Island of Souls		M. Urquhart.
Royal Lovers		Hélène Vacaresco.
The Two Faces		Marie van Vorst.
First Love		Marie van Vorst.

The Girl from His Town		Marie van Vorst.
Mr. Perrin and Mr. Traill.	*2nd Edition*	Hugh Walpole.
The King's Highway.		H. B. Marriott Watson.
The Captain's Daughter		Helen H. Watson.
Tess of Ithaca		Grace Miller White
An Averted Marriage	*2nd Edition*	Percy White.
Memoirs of a Buccaneer		Robert Williams.
The Honourable Derek		R. A. Wood-Seys.
The Rajah's People	*8th Edition*	I. A. R. Wylie.
Dividing Waters	*4th Edition*	I. A. R. Wylie.
A Blot on the Scutcheon	*2nd Edition*	May Wynne.
For Church and Chieftain		May Wynne.

MILLS & BOON'S

SHILLING NET LIBRARY

SPARROWS: The Story of an Unprotected Girl	HORACE W. C. NEWTE
THE LONELY LOVERS	HORACE W. C. NEWTE
CARDILLAC	ROBERT BARR
THE END AND THE BEGINNING	COSMO HAMILTON
THE VEIL	E. S. STEVENS
CUMNER'S SON (Cloth)	GILBERT PARKER
THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN JACK	MAX PEMBERTON
BEWARE OF THE DOG	MRS. BAILLIE REYNOLDS
THE PRODIGAL FATHER	J. STORER CLOUSTON
TALES OF KING FIDO	J. STORER CLOUSTON
MARY	WINIFRED GRAHAM
THE GOLDFISH	LILA FIELD
FOR CHURCH AND CHIEFTAIN	MAY WYNNE
WEE MACGREEGOR	J. J. BELL
PROOFS BEFORE PULPING	BARRY PAIN
THE DIARY OF A BABY	BARRY PAIN
THOMAS HENRY	W. PETT RIDGE
***THE DOLLAR PRINCESS**	HAROLD SIMPSON
***D'ARCY OF THE GUARDS**	L. E. SHIPMAN
***ARSÈNE LUPIN**	EDGAR JEPSON & MAURICE LEBLANC
***PETER PAN**	G. D. DRENNAN

* *Novels of the Play.* (*See also page 21*).

EDUCATIONAL BOOKS

Full particulars of any of the following may be obtained on application to MILLS & BOON, LTD. Heads of Schools are invited to write for specimen copies of books likely to prove suitable for Introduction as class books.

ENGLISH

Henry V. Edited in accordance with the Board of Education's Suggestions by C. R. Gilbert, M.A. With Notes and Illustrations. 1s. Plain text, 6d. net.

FRENCH

Barrère's Elementary French Course. 1s.
Barrère's Intermediate French Course. 2s.
Barrère's Précis of Comparative French Grammar. 3s. 6d.
Barrère's Récits Militaires. 3s.
Barrère's Short Passages for French Composition. 2s. 6d.
Bossut's French Word Book. 1s.
Bossut's French Phrase Book. 6d. net.
Davis and Thomas's Elementary French Reader. 1s. 6d.
Delille's Beginner's Own French Book. 2s.
Shrive's First French Unseen Book. 6d. net.
Shrive's Second French Unseen Book. 1s. net.

MODERN FRENCH AUTHORS

With Introductions, Notes, Exercises for Retranslation, Vocabularies, etc.

Balzac.—Ursule Mirouët. Without vocabulary, 2s.
Claretie.—Pierrille. With vocabulary, 1s. 6d. Without vocab., 1s.
Daudet.—La Belle Nivernaise. With vocabulary, 1s. 6d. Without, 1s.
Gréville.—Le Moulin Frappier. With vocabulary, 2s. Without, 1s. 6d.
Hugo.—Bug Jargal. Without vocabulary, 2s.
Mérimée.—Tamango and **José Maria le Brigand.** With vocabulary, 1s. 6d.
de Nerval.—La Main Enchantée. With vocabulary, 1s.
Toudouze.—Madame Lambelle. Without vocabulary, 2s.

GEOGRAPHY

Bird's Junior Geography. 1s. net.
Bird's School Geography. 2s. 6d.

GERMAN GRAMMARS AND READERS

By FRANZ LANGE, Ph.D., late Professor of German at the Roya Military Academy, Woolwich.

Elementary German Grammar. 1s. 6d.
Intermediate German Grammar. 1s. 6d.
Advanced German Grammar. 3s. 6d.
Elementary German Course. 2s.
Intermediate German Course. 2s.

EDUCATIONAL BOOKS—German—*continued*

Advanced German Course. 1s. 6d.
Elementary German Reader. 1s. 6d.
Advanced German Reader. 3s.

MODERN GERMAN AUTHORS

With Introductions, Notes, Vocabularies, Exercises for Retranslation, etc.

Auerbach and Roquette.—Auf Wache and **Der Gefrorene Kuss.** Without vocabulary, 2s.
Auerbach.—Selections from Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten. With vocabulary, 2s. Without vocabulary, 1s. 6d.
Bechstein.—Ausgewählte Märchen. With vocabulary, 1s. 6d. Without vocabulary, 1s.
Benedix.—Doktor Wespe. With vocabulary, 2s. Without, 1s. 6d.
Ebers.—Eine Frage. Without vocabulary, 2s.
Freytag.—Die Journalisten. Without vocabulary, 2s.
Freytag.—Soll und Haben. Without vocabulary, 2s.
German Epic Tales. Without vocabulary, 2s.
Gutzkow.—Zopf und Schwert. Without vocabulary, 2s.
Hey's Fabeln für Kinder. Without vocabulary, 1s. 6d.
Heyse.—Hans Lange. With vocabulary, 2s. Without vocab., 1s. 6d.
Hoffmann.—Meister Martin. Without vocabulary, 1s. 6d.
Hoffmann.—Schiller's Jugendjahre. Without vocabulary, 1s. 6d.
Moser.—Der Bibliothekar. With vocabulary, 2s. Without, 1s. 6d.
Scheffel's Selections from Ekkehard. Without vocabulary, 2s.
Wildenbruch.—Ein Opfer des Berufs and **Mein Onkel aus Pommern.** With vocabulary, 2s. Without vocabulary, 1s. 6d.

HISTORY

Carnegy's Kings and Queens of France. 3s. 6d.
Troutbeck's Story of Westminster Abbey. 1s.

LATIN

Williamson's First Latin Unseen Book. 6d. net.
Williamson's Second Latin Unseen Book. 1s. net.

MATHEMATICS

Boon's Preparatory Arithmetic. 1s. Answers, with hints, 6d. net.
Boon's Public School Arithmetic. With answers, 4s. Without answers, 3s. 6d. Answers only, 6d. net.
Deakin's New School Geometry. 1s.
Deakin's Rural Arithmetic. With answers, 1s. 6d. Without, 1s.
Harrison's Practical Mathematics. With answers, 1s. 6d. Without answers, 1s. 3d.

SCIENCE

Oldham's First School Chemistry. With 71 Illustrations. 2s. 6d.
Oldham's Elementary Quantitative Analysis. With 11 diagrams, 1s. 6d.
Bucknell's Practical Course in First Year Physics. With 85 Illustrations. 1s.

Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury—11/8419.

HI
B1486m

Author Bagot, Richard

Title My Italian year

128991

NAME OF BORROWER.

DATE.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LIBRARY

Do not
remove
the card
from this
Pocket.

Acme Library Card Pocket
Under Pat. "Ref. Index File."
Made by LIBRARY BUREAU